ALEXANDRE DUMAS

HIS LIFE AND WORKS

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(père)
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By
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"Vastus animus immoderata, incredibilia,
Nimis alta semper cupiebat."
(SALLUST, *Catilina* V)

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Preface

IT may be—to be exact, it is—a somewhat presumptuous thing to write a book and call it *Alexandre Dumas*. There is no question here of introducing an unknown man or discovering an unrecognized genius. Dumas is, and has been for the better part of a century, the property of all the world: there can be little new to say about one of whom so much has already been said. Remembering also, as I do, a dictum by one of our best known men of letters to the effect that the adequate biographer of Dumas neither is nor is likely to be, I accept the saying at this moment with all the unfeigned humility which experience entitles me to claim. My own belief on this point is that, if we could conceive a writer who combined in himself the anecdotal facility of Suetonius or Saint Simon, with the loaded brevity of Tacitus and the judicial irony of Gibbon, such an one might essay the task with a reasonable prospect of success—though, after all, the probability is that he would be quite out of sympathy with Dumas. However that be, I console myself by reflecting that—to adapt a familiar Dumas story—*il y a des degrés*, and by hoping that, in the scale of degrees, this book may not be at the very lowest.

Then, there is—or there was, on the 24th of July in this year—the centenary of Dumas' birth. Centenaries threaten to become a nuisance, nor is there any particular reason why

a man should be more worthy of notice at a hundred years from his birth than at ninety-nine or a hundred and one. Still the excuse will serve for a reason: a century is, no doubt, a good number, and demands—like Sydney Smith's Equator—to be treated with all possible respect.

And so, after a fairly extensive study, during the last fifteen years, of Dumas and whatever has been written about him, it seemed to me that there was room for a co-ordination of facts which might represent, in justly balanced proportion, and with some pretence of accuracy, both the life of the man and the work of the author. Considering the number and variety of opinions, my object might be expressed—I use the words with all reverence—as "*ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατήχθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφαλείαν.*"

In attempting this I make no apology for the amount of space which I have given to literature—dramas, novels, and the rest. Dumas lived writing, and writing lived: that was his incessant occupation, to a degree perhaps unparalleled. It would be ridiculous to relegate all this to a secondary place, simply to make room for a larger collection of the curiosities of private life—though no one will find that anecdotes have been neglected. To his dramatic work, though it may not be of such general interest, I have assigned a prominent position for reasons which I have made clear in the book; and I have not hesitated, even at the cost of re-telling an old tale, to try and give a reasoned *résumé* of all the familiar romances. Without for a moment wishing these pages to be considered as an "appreciation"—that word of harsh and arrogant import—I should be proud to think that they possessed some of the qualities of a history. To theorize has not been a primary intention—that has been amply done already. Some views or con-

choosing these I have been guided partly by the authority of others, partly by my own judgment.

But, while recognizing that the life of Dumas must be before all things the life of a literary man, I have been careful to attach to this string all the principal events of a career redundant with every kind of interest; so that, on the whole, if a separate computation should be made, it would probably be found that the doings and the writings—the life and the work—divide this book pretty evenly between them. In such a case—with a vast mass of material and the necessity of reducing from a larger to a smaller scale—the question is one of method and proportion, if one seeks something complete within its own limits. I say "its limits," because none but a simpleton or an impostor would think to measure the length and breadth of Alexandre Dumas within the compass of one moderate volume. Any one, out of half a dozen aspects of the man, supplies material for a book as large as this. And, in fact, the various French works concerning Dumas have all confined themselves to some particular side of his talent or some particular period of his life: there does not exist in his own country any comprehensive and continuous work—biographical and literary—such as this is intended approximately to be. I have been bound, therefore, in the process of selection, to leave out things which some would wish inserted, and to insert what some would think might be omitted, guided only by my own very fallible judgment.

I have—in view of the ground to be covered—divided the work into large sections or chapters (largeness seems appropriate when dealing with Dumas), with commonplace titles, which roughly indicate the nature of their contents. The order followed is, as a rule, chronological, though in one or two instances it has been slightly varied, for the sake of

grouping. In such cases—and *passim*—an abundant supply of dates will, I hope, prevent any confusion. In describing the life of Dumas, it goes without saying that I have not scrupled, whenever the occasion required, to call a spade by its simple name rather than by any out-worn euphemism. I have employed notes partly to save the text, partly for other reasons, which will appear to those who read them. I have arranged a bibliography—based as to certain details on the recognized authorities—Quérard, Parran, d'Heilly, and especially M. Charles Glinel, for the benefit of all whom such things interest; and the number of Dumas' collaborators may be reckoned up by any one with a turn for elementary arithmetic. I have added also an index, which, without being strictly scientific, may be of some general utility.

Of the French authorities enumerated in Appendix II —the majority of whom I have consulted at first hand—none is more valuable than M. Glinel's book, to which, for its bibliographical research and its chronological *data*, every student of Dumas must be infinitely indebted. The works of Blaze de Bury, Philibert Audebrand, Gabriel Ferry, and M. Parigot's two books are all very useful on special points. Dumas himself—duly checked by reference to other authorities —is and remains the chief source of information about Dumas, in details which are scattered broadcast through the multitude of his writings. And here I may observe, in passing, that whenever the narrative comes from him I have tried—amid all the pressure of condensation—to preserve the spirit and style of the original, feeling that to do aught else would be at once a treachery to the best of *raconteurs* and an insult to one's readers.

As to other documents on the subject, we all of us know people who met Dumas in the flesh and have somewhat to

say about him—though it would seem a fatuous thing to parade private sources of information in the case of a man about whom everything worth knowing has been known, or knowable, for a good many years past. Of secondary authorities—for I consider, of course, the French as primary—I have not attempted to compile a list of those who have written about Dumas in our language, but I am conscious of having read, at one time or other, any number of articles in English and American magazines. There is also Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's book, *The Life and Adventures of Alexandre Dumas*. Several English writers have been quoted or referred to in the course of the following pages. Thackeray, Abraham Hayward, R. L. Stevenson, in the past; in the present, Mr. W. E. Henley (*Views and Reviews*), Mr. Andrew Lang (*Essays in Little* and elsewhere), Mr. W. H. Pollock, Professor Saintsbury are names which occur at random; and if there be any other eminent men whom I ought to mention, I crave pardon for the momentary forgetfulness and express my gratitude for any good things I may have unconsciously absorbed from them.[1] Such names are sufficient, at any rate, to show that appreciation of Dumas is not solely or necessarily the mark of the literary plebeian, as some would arrogantly have us believe. In no country has he been more steadily esteemed than in England. In France it may be that at present the young compose the bulk of his readers: here—in spite of, or because of, our slower temperament—all ages still resort to him by way of refuge or relaxation. To the people he will always appeal first; but besides the great People, we have good ground for believing—unless report speak false—that princes,

[1] I should add Mr. Brander Matthews' essay on Dumas in *French Dramatists of the Nineteenth Century*, which—read many years ago—first sent me to the plays of Dumas.

premiers, and prelates have been known to shirk or solace the cares of State and Church in the imaginative pages of *Monte Cristo* and *Les Trois Mousquetaires*. "Posterity for me," said Dumas, "begins at the frontier"; it is pleasant to think that England forms no inconsiderable part of that frontier.

A. F. D.

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CHAPTER I

THE BOY

(1802–1818)

THE name Dumas is neither rare nor undistinguished in France. There was a Doctor of the Sorbonne, Hilaire Dumas, a learned theologian; there was Louis Dumas, a writer on the theory of music, and tutor to the Marquis de Montcalm; there was René François Dumas, assessor of Fouquier-Tinville, and his equal in ferocity; there was Count Mathieu Dumas, who filled important military offices under the Republic and the Empire, originated the idea of the Legion of Honour, and wrote a history of Napoleon's campaigns. And there were some fifty others. Among them, contemporary with our own Alexandre, there lived an Adolphe Dumas, destined by rather unkind fortune to be also something of a poet and dramatist. Of him it is said that, having had a play of his produced at the Théâtre Français, and happening to meet Alexandre in the *foyer* that evening, he exclaimed with a natural complacency, "Hitherto the Français has had its two Corneilles, henceforth it will have its two Dumas." "Quite true," replied the author of *The Musketeers*, "and you have my best wishes for your success, Thomas." To which—with apologies for explaining the obvious—it may be added that the name of the great Corneille was Pierre, that of his brother Thomas.

With none, however, of these other families was our Dumas connected: he was, in fact, only the second bearer of a name assumed under circumstances which require a brief genealogical notice. The Marquis (or Count, as some will have it) de la Pailleterie—Antoine Alexandre Davy de la Pailleterie, to give him his full style—represented one branch of an ancient Norman family. About 1760 this nobleman, who had held various positions at Court—whether from falling into disfavour, or from motives of speculation, or from mere *ennui*—exchanged Versailles for St. Domingo, where he purchased an estate, and took unto himself a native woman, by name Marie Cessette Dumas. Of this union[1] a son was born, Thomas Alexandre Davy de la Pailleterie. Eighteen years elapsed, the mother died, and the Marquis returned to Paris, accompanied by his son. The young man—a fine specimen of tropical growth now transplanted to the centre of things—was ready for all the attractions of Paris life. But there were two obstacles in his way. The exclusive society of pre-Revolution France regarded with coolness one who was so very distinctly an *homme de couleur*; and the Marquis, his paternal instincts perhaps blunted by a similar prejudice, displaying at any rate the common virtue of economy at the expense of others, was none too kind or too liberal of his money. Hence unpleasant relations, increased by the old man's second marriage, and ending in an open rupture. "And so my father" (for we are speaking now of the famous father of a famous son), "resolving to carve his fortune with his sword, en-

[1] The question of a marriage ceremony or not is unprovable and profitless; but, as between a French aristocrat and a negress it is very unlikely. Moreover the action of the General in parting from his father, and enlisting under his mother's name, seems to show that he was aware that he had no claim to the title of the Marquis.

listed in what was then (1786) 'The Queen's Dragoons.'" The Marquis had stipulated only that his aristocratic name should not be borne by a common private; and therefore the young soldier, assuming his mother's name, enrolled himself simply as Alexandre Dumas. Very soon afterwards the Marquis died, "as became an old nobleman who did not care to see the fall of the Bastille." With him the "Marquisate"[1] became practically extinct, and though the arms (three eagles) and the title—submerged in the Revolution—were fifty years later claimed by the novelist, and used by him in official designations, they had obviously only a burlesque value at a time when all the world had become familiar with the name of Alexandre Dumas.

To return to the first bearer of the name. He had enlisted at an opportune moment. No sooner did the war of the Revolution break out than promotion followed upon merit with a rapidity unequalled, or equalled only by other instances of that same period. He was still a private at the end of 1791; by September 1793 he had risen to be General Dumas commanding the "Army of the Western Pyrenees." Meanwhile he had (in November 1792) married Marie Elisabeth Louise Labouret, daughter of the proprietor of the Hôtel de l'Écu at Villers-Cotterets, whose acquaintance he had made when stationed on garrison duty in that town. To describe from this point the exploits of "my father" would be an attractive and inspiring task. Dumas devotes more than a half of the first volume of his *Memoirs* to a story

[1] There has been much disputation on the subject of this Marquisate. The fact seems to be that the Seigneur de la Pailleterie, father of Antoine Alexandre, had on some occasion claimed and assumed the style of Marquis, which he was allowed to retain as a courtesy title, although no territorial Marquisate existed. The *title* therefore of Dumas' grandfather as Marquis de la Pailleterie was quite valid.

which is hardly less romantic than one of his own romances. The merest outline must here suffice to show what manner of man was General Dumas.

To begin with, he was dark—very dark—as was natural to his origin; supple and well knit of figure, of prodigious strength, a swarthy Hercules, for whom it was a commonplace event to remove a big gate from its hinges, to raise a heavy gun on a couple of fingers, to lift a comrade by the seat of his breeches and fling him over a wall, and to perform many other feats which might draw an envious groan from the strongest of professional "strong men." In character ardent and generous, quick to resent and to forgive, the kind of man who upon the least affront was always sending in his resignation, were it not for a prudent aide-de-camp who suppressed these documents till his superior had cooled down: a patriot, like most of the Republican Generals, as well as a soldier, sincerely devoted to the Revolution, but detesting its cruelties. Sent into La Vendée, he frankly condemned the brutality and indiscipline of the Government's troops. His merciful disposition made him abhor the constant executions which the civil power deemed necessary. "Take away that ugly machine," he said, pointing to the guillotine, "and break it up for firewood." The crowd hooted outside his windows, and jeered him as "Monsieur de l'humanité." Being transferred to the Army of the Alps, by his brilliant capture of Mont Cenis he redeemed, in the eyes of Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois and the rest, an excess of humanity otherwise fatal. We find him a little later under Joubert in the Tyrol, commanding the cavalry. Here, heroically defending the bridge of Clausen against the Austrians, he was called—agreeably with the classic nomenclature of the day—"The Horatius Cocles of the Tyrol." "Send me Dumas," said Bonaparte to Joubert, when fresh

from the triumphs of his Italian campaign he wanted to form some cavalry regiments. But Bonaparte and Dumas were antipathetic from the first. The latter naturally fell into the background like many others reduced by the turn of events to be merely divisional generals from being generals-in-chief. A period of retirement and residence at Villers-Cotterets followed. Then came the great Egyptian expedition, and the General, chafing at inaction, welcomed the chance of service even in a subordinate capacity. At Toulon, before starting, Bonaparte and he seem for a moment to have been on the most friendly terms. At any rate they made a compact, Josephine being present, that whichever of the two should first be blessed with a son, the other should stand godfather. So near did Alexander the Great come to being godson of Napoleon the Great. But Egypt upset that arrangement, amongst others. For it was in Egypt that the personal ambition of Bonaparte became clear to his generals, who, amid the hardships of the desert, unrelieved by the barren victory of the Pyramids, began to ask one another, " To what end is all this ? " General Dumas, too impulsive or too patriotic to hide his sentiments, was regarded as the source of disaffection. As the result of an angry scene, in which Bonaparte behaved with the ill-bred violence usual to him on such occasions, Dumas requested and obtained leave to return to France at the earliest opportunity. He did not go, however, before he had distinguished himself by quelling a formidable revolt in Cairo—his last chance as it proved of active service; for on the voyage back, being driven by storm to put in at Tarentum, he fell into the hands of the Bourbon Government of Naples. Animated by a natural hatred of the French Republic, this Government seized him and his companions and locked them up in the Castle of Tarentum, authorizing the Governor to make

judicious experiments in the effect of various poisons. General Dumas survived this imprisonment, which lasted from March 1799 to April 1801, but he emerged fatally injured in health, and feeling the first symptoms of an internal cancer which eventually carried him off. Much had happened during the two years' captivity. Napoleon had overthrown the Directory, and as First Consul had again wrested Italy from the Austrians. The Neapolitan Government had been made to pay a heavy indemnity for its treatment of French prisoners, but our General was not among the sharers in this sum of money. His son ascribes this and subsequent neglect to Napoleon's deliberate intention of punishing one whose opposition in Egypt had stung him to the quick: it is safe at any rate to assert that the First Consul had sufficient other business on hand to trouble himself little about a man whom he had either forgotten or remembered only with dislike. And so this brave soldier returned home to Villers-Cotterets to live with his wife, on a modest retiring pension of £160. The couple had already had one child—a daughter, Aimée Alexandrine Dumas,[1] now eight years old. About a twelvemonth after the General's return their second child was born—a son, named after his father, Alexandre Dumas. The General's health grew steadily worse as the fatal disease advanced. He made several fruitless efforts, personally and through friends, to obtain either a share of the indemnity or his arrears of pay due for the period of his captivity; and he died early in 1806, at the age of forty-four, worn out by pain and disappointment. Thus much at least of tribute is due to the memory of the first, and essentially the most admirable of the three men who have borne the name of Alexandre

[1] She married Monsieur Victor Letellier, an official in the Revenue Department.

Dumas. He was one of those who do the things which others write about, a simple heroic figure fairly to be classed with Hoche and Marceau, Joubert and Kléber—like him men whose fortune was unequal to their merit, men of single purpose, brave deeds, and early death. Some few of his characteristics will appear to have been inherited by his son.

Let us return now to the son. "I was born on July 24, 1802, at Villers-Cotterets, a small town in the department of Aisne, two leagues from Ferté-Milon, the birthplace of Racine, and seven from Château-Thierry, that of La Fontaine." In these words Dumas announces the date and place of his birth, as well as the literary tone of his natal air. Of Villers-Cotterets itself nothing has to be said except that it is a placid little country town, about forty miles from Paris, on the high road to the Belgian frontier, the nearest place of any size being Soissons. Its fine castle, built by Francis I, and for generations an appanage of the Orleans family, had degenerated into a *dépôt de mendicité*; its magnificent forest was cut down by Louis Philippe, who valued cash more than sentiment. As against these departed glories Villers-Cotterets has the honour of being the birthplace of Alexandre Dumas. The house in which he was born stood in the then Rue de Lormet; since 1872 the street has been called Rue Alexandre Dumas. The little house, No. 54, is—or was till quite recently—still standing, though it has many times changed owners and occupiers. Among the oldest of the father's friends was General Brune, and to him General Dumas wrote announcing the birth of his son, and asking him to be godfather. Brune begged to be excused on the ground that he had already filled that position five times and on each occasion his godchild had died. Eventually, according to Dumas' account, he yielded to pressure, and (by proxy) stood godfather to the infant, the other sponsor,

according to French custom, being the child's sister. As attested, by the baptismal records, the acting *parrain* seems to have been Claude Labouret, the father of Madame Dumas.

Soon afterwards the family moved to a house in the outskirts of the town, and to this house—Les Fossés by name—the boy's earliest memories relate. Naturally they are connected with his father, whose strength and grace of form, even as impaired by illness, created, no less than his genial character, a tradition of "the General" long preserved in Villers-Cotterets. Lasting though the impressions of childhood be, phenomenal as Dumas' memory was, we may suppose that it was mainly from this tradition, assisted by maternal conversations in later years, that he evolved certain pleasing and pathetic pictures of the short part of his own life which overlapped his father's. One such picture is of a visit to Paris, in the autumn of 1805, undertaken chiefly to consult the famous surgeon Corvisart. They stayed in the Rue Thiroux at the house of one Dollé, a quaint old-fashioned little man in grey frock coat, velvet knee-breeches, and buckled shoes, with "a pigtail which, caught by the collar of his coat, rose skyward in a most imposing manner." Enriched with a pair of earrings, as was the custom then, young Dumas was taken by his father to a large mansion with servants in red livery. Passing through many apartments they reached a bedroom where, reclining on a long easy-chair, lay a venerable silver-haired lady, whose hand the General respectfully kissed. The lady patted the boy's cheeks and fondled his hair while conversing with the father. She was Madame la Marquise de Montesson, widow of Louis Philippe d'Orléans (the grandson of the Regent), a "grande dame" of the eighteenth century, and a rare example of virtue unquestioned in an age which questioned all things.

To luncheon next day came Brune and Murat. Both men, having followed the fortunes of Napoleon, were now Marshals of the Empire, and General Dumas, conscious of his own approaching end, hoped they might do something for his wife and children. The boy was presented to them, and played "gee-gee" with Brune's sword between his legs and Murat's cocked hat upon his head. Ten years later both these soldiers perished, the one murdered by the populace at Avignon, the other shot by court-martial at Pinzo: Dumas, having visited the places, has recounted the manner of their deaths in his *Impressions de Voyage*. Returning home from Paris, the family moved back into Villers-Cotterets itself, taking a set of rooms in what was now the Hôtel de l'Épée, having formerly been the Hôtel de l'Écu when owned by the father of Madame Dumas. The invalid's growing feebleness, the horse now seldom mounted, the gun that hung unused, a look of sadness when he lifted the boy to his face—these were signs palpable to the child's mind. One evening they took the little one from the hotel and put him for the night in charge of a cousin whose father kept a forge. He was allowed to sit up later that evening than usual, feasting his eyes on the fitful flashes of light the forge gave forth; at last, tired out, he was carried to his cot, his cousin, a girl of fifteen, occupying a bed in the same room. About midnight both sleepers were aroused by a loud knock on the outer door, the inner one being locked. Pale and scared, as seen by the dim night-lamp that burned on a table, the girl started up; the boy, divining by instinct a father's farewell, struggled from her restraining hands to reach the door, crying, "Good-bye, papa, good-bye." Then, forced back into his cot, he sank into a dreamless sleep, next morning to learn that God had taken away his father that night.

The solemn rites over, the tribute of tears paid, a practical situation had to be faced. The General's retiring allowance ceased with his death, and his widow by the letter of the law had no right to any pension, her husband not having died on the field of battle or within six months from wounds received in action. Morally, and considering General Dumas' services, she had the strongest claims. These were pressed in varying degrees of earnestness by Murat, Lannes, Jourdan, and others, most ardently by Brune, to whom at length Napoleon angrily said, "Let me never hear that man's name again." As a last resort, the widow herself went to Paris to beg an audience of the Emperor, which being refused, she returned to Villers-Cotterets the poorer by the cost of the journey. Madame Dumas had no private income, though on her father's death she would inherit some thirty acres of land in an adjoining village; there was the reversion also of a house and garden in Villers-Cotterets, at present burdened with a life annuity payable to an old gentleman who, though already past fourscore, continued with the proverbial longevity of his kind to exist securely for another ten years. On this prospective property it was possible and necessary to effect loans, so continuous that when the inheritance at last was realized and sold by Madame Dumas the whole of it except some two hundred francs was found to be swallowed up by the principal and interest of borrowed money. By this means, however, together with the help of relatives and friends, a bare present subsistence was obtained. The girl, Aimée Alexandrine, was soon put to a boarding-school in Paris, so that brother and sister saw little of each other. The widow, joining household with her father and mother, remained with the boy in the same house they had occupied before the General's death.

At this point Dumas' memory grows more distinct. He

recalls three houses in which his childhood was chiefly passed, those of Madame Darcourt, Monsieur Déviolaine and Monsieur Collard. The first was the widow of an army surgeon, sympathetic as having herself known bereavement. It was here that young Alexandre studied the animal world in the pages of Buffon, or rather in the coloured plates which adorned *L'Histoire Naturelle*. Curiosity soon bridged the gulf between pictures and print, and the art of reading was acquired. Then there was Monsieur Deviolaine, connected by marriage with the Dumas family, inspector of the large forest with its thirty thousand acres, a person of high consequence in the little town with its two thousand souls. M. Déviolaine by his second marriage had a young family, cousins and playmates of Alexandre Dumas. He was himself a man of rough exterior and kind heart, gusty in temper and forcible of speech, constantly barking but never biting : a good friend withal to Madame Dumas, and sincerely interested in the welfare of a boy whom he soon came to regard as something of a scapegrace. Not least among the attractions of his house was a spacious garden of fruit and flowers. Finally there was M. Collard de Montjouy—an aristocrat who had dropped his aristocratic name, a member of the Legislative Body, an affable and pleasant person, occupying an elegant *château* some three miles out of the town. Here young Dumas spent many happy hours ; and just as Madame Darcourt's was associated in his mind with the Buffon, so M. Collard's provided the equal delight of a superb illustrated Bible. M. Collard's wife was a daughter of the well-known Madame de Genlis ; and it happened one evening that this lady, coming to visit her daughter and having gone astray in the forest after dark, arrived in a state of hysterical alarm, due to her mortal fear of ghosts. Into the room she burst, an uncanny figure in black, with her

hood torn, her false hair flown away, and her natural hair falling grisly on each side of her face—a weird object to the eyes of the boy, who thought of her afterwards when he read about Meg Merrilies. Meanwhile the Bible and Buffon, supplemented by *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Arabian Nights*, and a *Mythology for the Young*, made up a creditable display of erudition for a child of six. Mythology was an especial favourite, and readers of Dumas will remember how often he introduces illustrations from this pleasant branch of classical lore. Writing he learnt from his sister during her holidays; music his mother fondly hoped he might acquire with equal ease. And so she put him in the hands of the local professor, a quaint figure of a long slender man in maroon frock-coat and black silk skull-cap—the latter head-piece being worn on ordinary days as preferable to a wig, which was apt to adhere to the hat rather than the head, and was reserved for Sundays and festivals. Poor Hiraux! His musical soul was sorely vexed by the youth of Villers-Cotterets, nor was it fated that he should find consolation in his new pupil. Three years' tuition in the violin revealed a case so hopeless that the music master's conscience would no longer allow him to take the widow's money. Dumas, in fact, had neither voice nor ear. He was, and remained, like some other eminent men—like Hugo and Gautier among his contemporaries—quite destitute of the musical sense; and though he was not the author of the sentiment that "Music is the most disagreeable of all noises," it is one to which he would probably have subscribed. Seriously concerned now for his education, his mother was making vain efforts to get him in as a foundationer at one or other of the colleges for the sons of officers, when it happened that a cousin, the Abbé Conseil, died leaving a bursary for one of his relatives at the Seminary of Soissons. Nothing could

have seemed more opportune. Our north country adage that when there is nothing else to do with a lad you must "make a passon of 'un" had its equivalent in the north of France, and was bound to appear a doubly commendable maxim when it included good board and education free of charge. But Alexandre was very reluctant: for three months he resisted his mother, and at last gave way. It was the eve of his departure, and everything was ready except a few small purchases which the future seminarist was to make for himself, one of these being an inkstand. While he was engaged in selecting this article from the assortment kept by the principal grocer of the place, Miss Cécile Déviolaine supervened on the scene. This young lady had ever been foremost among the scoffers at the idea of her cousin becoming a priest; and on this occasion, knowing it her last, she surpassed herself in gibes. Dumas could bear it no longer: the dramatic moment had come. Asserting his freedom of will he flung down the inkstand, and said, "I will *not* go to the Seminary." Thus once more from trivial causes great events do spring. Our mind positively refuses to attempt any calculation of what the Church may have lost or the world gained by this decision. Instead of going to Soissons, Dumas ran off and hid in the forest, leaving a note to lessen his mother's anxiety. For three days and nights he took shelter in the hut of a friendly native—a loafer whose chief occupation was poaching and bird-snaring, and his special faculty a monstrous appetite. Of this personage, called Boudoux, other things are related, and especially this. When the Prince de Condé came to Villers-Cotterets shortly after the Restoration and brought with him a pack of a hundred and twenty hounds, Boudoux obtained a subordinate office in the kennels, his duty being to feed the dogs. Before long it was observed that the

animals did not flourish as they should: their lean and hungry look turned suspicion upon Boudoux, and it was discovered that he was in the habit of consuming on his own account one-third of the total rations of dogs' meat. Such a feat was too great for punishment, but henceforward Boudoux was reckoned as the equivalent of forty dogs, and had a special supply appropriated to him. If this prodigy seem unworthy the dignity of history, or the investigation of a scientific age, let Dumas' *Memoirs* bear the burden: Boudoux was a friend of his, and like most of his friends a remarkable person.

Another friend was the Abbé Grégoire, to whose instructions the truant was committed when he had returned from the forest and had been duly pardoned by his mother. She, good lady, was at heart not sorry to keep him at home, and he on his side had no objection to attending the day school kept by the kind priest he had known all his life. His education, in the shape of regular lessons, now began—an easy course of study broken by pretty frequent holidays. During one of these he was invited to spend a few days with a distant connection, the Curé of Béthisy, some fourteen miles from Villers-Cotterets. Abbé Fortier was a good sort of man in his way, though his way was very different from that of Abbé Grégoire. The latter was the type of a simple and pious priest, solely devoted to the welfare, bodily and spiritual, of his flock; the other was a military and militant ecclesiastic whom nature had destined to be the Colonel of a dragoon regiment, and circumstances had landed in the cure of a small country parish. Abbé Fortier was fond of his dinner, fond of his billiards, and fondest of his gun—a sporting parson who established records in the rapidity with which he could say Mass, divest himself, and start off in quest of hares or partridges. These things were a great

delight to his young visitor, whose aversion from music was balanced by an ardent love of gymnastic in every form. Accompanying the Abbé on his shooting expeditions, rivalling and impeding the dogs in his eagerness to pick up the game, young Dumas, undeterred by some natural objurgations, developed an innate taste for sport, and longed for the time when he should be allowed to handle a gun. After a fortnight's visit he returned to his mother. The grandfather with whom they had lived being now dead, Madame Dumas had moved back again to the Rue de Lormet, close to the house where her son had been born. Here was resumed the tranquil routine of home life, the lessons at Abbé Grégoire's, the rambles in the forest—boyish work and boyish play. Not least memorable were the daily walks to the cemetery, the solemn moments at the father's grave, the sight of other fresh graves added year by year—impressions of the unseen world creative of a sentiment at least which lingered indestructible amid all the restless turmoil of later years.

Dumas was nearly twelve when the peaceful tenor of his life was disturbed by momentous public events. It was in 1814, and the armies of the Allied Powers were closing round France. Napoleon's star had set. He was no longer in the people's eye the genius of glory and victory, but the Man of Moscow, the Man of Leipzig—the destroyer who had for years been draining the blood of France, tearing husbands from wives, sons from mothers, to perish on far-off battlefields. And now the invader's foot was on the "sacred soil." News of the occupation of Laon first disquieted the people of Villers-Cotterets, who began to pack up their belongings and conceal them in cellars or caves. Soon they learnt from fugitives that Soissons had fallen—Soissons, only sixteen miles from their own place. Then indeed the panic was real. Alarming pictures of gigantic Cossack horsemen, barbarians

armed with spear and bow and arrows, so dismayed the inhabitants that, suspending their ordinary pursuits, a good half of the population fled to a large subterranean cavern a little distant from the town, and known as "The Quarry." Here, deep down—the descent being effected by a ladder—provisions were stored and an encampment set up, ready for refuge the moment need should be. Madame Dumas and her son were among the emigrants, but she, with a just appreciation of the male creature, believing that even Cossack ferocity might be mitigated by a good square meal, had prepared and left at home an enormous haricot of mutton, together with some bottles of Soissons wine. Of course there were many false alarms; indeed the first troops to appear (and therefore to enjoy the haricot) were a French *corps* under the Duc de Trévise. This veteran's bent and weary figure, as he lay for the night in the Déviolaines' house, Dumas graphically describes, regarding him as a type of the Napoleonic Marshal who, having long since reached the summit of his ambition, craved only for the rest impossible to his unresting master. The Marshal, surprised and outnumbered by the enemy, had to withdraw to Compiégne. Still the Cossacks did not come. Reassuring rumours spread that Napoleon had checked and turned the invaders at Montmirail and Montereau, and that negotiations for peace were being pressed forward. The dwellers in the cave had crept back to the town and resumed their occupations, when suddenly, one February morning, the Cossacks really did come—only a small squadron of some twenty men who had lost their way and were seeking to rejoin the main body. Through Villers-Cotterets they swept at frantic speed: every door was barred, every window made fast. The enemy, fugitives in fact rather than conquerors, did no other harm; but one of them, in mere wantonness as he galloped

past, discharged his pistol at one of the closed shop doors, bringing instant death to the owner of the house, who stood behind it. This murder, as it seemed, caused another exodus. Madame Dumas, no longer trusting to the Quarry, set off with a vague idea of finding safety in the neighbourhood of Paris. Having reached Mesnil, she went no further, but allowed her son to be taken by a neighbour, who accompanied them, into Paris, to witness a great review of troops held by Joseph Bonaparte, and to hear the multitude shouting allegiance to Napoleon's infant son—the so-called "King of Rome"—held up to public gaze, in whose favour the Emperor was willing to abdicate. Next day the desertion of the capital by its rulers showed the fugitives the danger of their position, and it struck them for the first time that they were right in the line of the enemy advancing on Paris. Good luck rather than good guidance brought them back to Crépy, which being off the main road might afford safety. Safe it would have been, no doubt, but for possessing a small and defiant garrison resolved to keep a keen look-out and make its presence felt. Hence a conflict one day in the streets of Crépy between the defenders and a detachment of Prussian cavalry—fine fellows whose martial bearing and well-fitting uniform of blue and grey Dumas admired as from an attic window he watched them marching into the town. From the same vantage point he had a view of the *mêlée*, first stirring, no doubt, in his young heart that Homeric "joy of battle" which Mr. Andrew Lang[1] has remarked upon. The thunderous gallop of horses' hoofs as the cavalry of the garrison charged the intruders and drove them back; then the Prussians, reinforced, sweeping the French before them; a whirlwind of smoke and noise, a confusion of pistol-shots and sabre-cuts, of cries and groans; both sides finally

[1] *Essays in Little.*

getting away from the town and disappearing in valley or wood—all this Dumas records, things either seen or well imagined. The tempest over, in the silence and stillness which followed some were found dead, others wounded, to tend whom was the care of the women. This stay at Crépy soon ended with the circumstances which had made it necessary, and by the middle of April mother and son were back at Villers-Cotterets. The Bourbon restoration might possibly affect the future of Alexandre Dumas if he was willing to drop the name of a Republican father and come forward as the grandson of the Marquis Davy de la Pailleterie, a courtier and servant of the dynasty. The question, whether seriously or not, was put to him by his mother on the proposal of their friend M. Collard. There could be no doubt of his answer—an answer natural to the boyish mind free from calculations of self-interest. He knew nothing of his grandfather: of his father he cherished an affectionate remembrance. His mother herself had of course a still stronger feeling in the same direction. M. Collard therefore limited his efforts to procuring for Madame Dumas a licence to sell tobacco—a welcome relief of necessity, however incongruous to the widow of a distinguished general. Yet even this small privilege of the *bureau de tabac* aroused jealousy. Local opinion, curiously perverting the truth, tried to damage Madame Dumas by stigmatizing her as a Bonapartist; and many a black eye or bleeding nose did her son receive in his vigorous attempts to rebut this calumny. Before long, indeed, Bonapartism became again a practical question. In one of his most entertaining passages Dumas relates how the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba and his landing in France reached Villers-Cotterets. We can realize the good *bourgeois* or the small official spelling his laborious way through the verbosely cautious columns

of the *Moniteur*. We can see him, with many a "hum' and "haw," tackling the bureaucratic style, that marvellous instrument for wrapping the least amount of meaning in the greatest amount of language; raising his spectacles at those alarming words of "traitor," "treason," "enemy of the country"; breathing again at appeals to "loyalty" and "union"; wondering much whither all these proclamations and decrees tend; then at last divining in a flash the truth—that Napoleon is back again, that the army is with him, and that Louis XVIII will probably soon cease signing his decrees from "Our Palace of the Tuileries."

The mass of opinion in Villers-Cotterets was undoubtedly Royalist. The traditions of the place, its Château and forest, were aristocratic; and the usurper's progress was watched with a somewhat hostile curiosity. Carriages and couriers passing through brought constant news, anticipating the papers or supplementing them. Thus the people learnt of the coming campaign. Soon the troops began to march past, bound for Belgium. Before these fine soldiers, especially before the Old Guard—heroic remnant of so many battles—political feelings, however diverse, yielded to a common admiration. For these men, each one of whom seemed a conscious part of the Imperial edifice he had helped to raise, moved high and inspiring thoughts. They represented devotion, honour, loyalty to a leader and a cause: they represented a decade of glory unsurpassed: above all, they represented France against the world. Napoleon, according to his usual custom, followed by the same road as his Guard: he would therefore pass through Villers-Cotterets. On June 11 orders were received to have a relay of horses ready early next morning. On the 12th by 6 a.m. every one was on the look-out, for it was known that the Emperor had left Paris about three.

No sooner was the dust of the first carriage visible in the distance than a general rush was made to the posting-house, where a few moments' halt would be necessary to change horses. Dumas, of course, was among the foremost. He saw the three carriages dash up: he saw the Emperor in the second, sitting well back in the right-hand corner, dressed in green uniform with white facings and wearing the star of the Legion of Honour, his face sallow and his head drooping slightly forward. Beside him sat his brother Jerome, opposite to them an aide-de-camp. Roused by the stoppage, Napoleon looked sharply up and asked, "Where are we?" Being told, he replied, "Villers-Cotterets—Ah! six leagues from Soissons; get on quickly," and sank back again into his corner.[1] Already the fresh horses had been put to, the fresh postillions were in the saddle. Some shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" acknowledged by a slight bend of the head, and the carriages, dashing off again, were lost to sight round the turn of the Soissons road. What scene more memorable in a boy's life can be imagined? One other only, and that the complement of the first. After a week's suspense, on June 18, the news of Ligny and Quatre Bras arrived—the one a victory, the other construable as such. On the 20th the first messengers of evil came, a few ragged fugitives announcing a great disaster to incredulous and indignant ears. Threatened, they still held to their story, and carried conviction. From a courier who followed an hour or two later nothing further could be learnt: his business was simply to order four horses for an approaching carriage. That carriage was the Emperor's. Again Dumas

[1] Dumas recounts this episode of his life more than once, with slight variations. In *La Villa Palmieri* (*Impressions de Voyage*) Napoleon is said to have remarked that the Château of Villers-Cotterets would make good barracks.

saw him, seated as before. Was it fancy if his head seemed to droop a little more ? Was it weariness of body or of soul ? Otherwise the same man, the same pale impassive face, the same short sharp question. Outwardly the same, in truth who could measure the difference between this journey and that ? If any still doubted the sad event, there remained a contrast yet plainer and more terrible between the proud army that had gone forth and the broken crowd that now streamed back. No drums, no colours, no order of march was to be seen : those unhurt hastened on in front, behind came the wounded—a pitiful procession in open waggons jolting beneath the glare of the summer sun. Thus at a brief interval Alexandre Dumas witnessed these two opposite spectacles, the glitter of war and its hideous reality. Neither aspect of the Napoleonic legend was forgotten by him, though the coming generation loved to remember only the former. Philosophizing in later years on the event of Waterloo, he attributes the French overthrow to Destiny or Providence embodied in the forms of Wellington and Blucher : with this convenient explanation of all things, if it affords a salve to wounded patriotism, we need not quarrel.

Meanwhile amid so much excitement and alarm the boy's education was bound to be somewhat interrupted. His school days, strictly speaking, ended prematurely ; for the Abbé Grégoire had been compelled by some new regulations to give up keeping a " college," and was restricted henceforth to visiting pupils at their own houses. In this way Dumas continued to receive from the Abbé some hours' tuition every week in Latin, Vergil and Tacitus being the authors to whom he had now been promoted. By the help of a " crib," abstracted from the desk where the Abbé considerately left it, he was able to produce satisfactory and even elegant renderings of these classics ; his efforts at

turning French into Latin, depending on a dictionary and the light of nature, were less brilliant. Greek never entered into his curriculum, and any later acquaintance he may have had with that language was made in the fashion of Colonel Newcome; but he acquired a fair tincture of Latinity, not omitting the mythological studies referred to before. Vergil in especial—of whose *Æneid* he voluntarily committed to memory some three or four hundred lines—exercised for him now and always the fascination inspired in so many minds, alike by the lulling cadence of the poet's verse and by his subtle readings of the human heart, his tender "sense of tears," his intuitions of eternal truth.

Besides the Latin of Abbé Grégoire, Dumas had lessons in arithmetic and writing from the village schoolmaster. His taste for figures was about on a par with his taste for music; but he developed a very neat and rapid handwriting, destined to give him his first start in life and to remain throughout his career a cause of inexpressible joy to many scores of printers. The writing-master, Oblet by name, was proud of his pupil's hand, and took occasion (being a strong Royalist) to point the moral of good penmanship by an illustration from the opposite case of "that Monsieur Bonaparté" (as he styled the late Emperor), whose illegible scrawl was no doubt—in Oblet's opinion—the primary cause of all his misfortunes. Add to these lessons some instruction in fencing, and the tuition of Dumas—that part of it at least which was formal—will have been fairly summed up. His moral and religious training came mainly from his mother, whose influence reciprocated by filial affection served to restrain, if not to direct, a nature wholly emotional and impulsive. But mothers, the best of them, have in regard to their sons a kind of fond fatalism which leads them to acquiesce too readily and to accept good impulse as identical

with, or at any rate as a sure guarantee of, good character. It is no disparagement to Madame Dumas, or to her son's genuine love for her, to observe that young Alexandre would have been the better for a father's more positive control, and occasionally for that discipline which only the paternal hand can adequately enforce. The boy's sentiments were all honourable and generous ; but unfortunately sentiments, unless stiffened into principles, do not go far in negotiating the difficulties of life. The good Abbé Grégoire probably foresaw this when, showing a fatherly interest in the fatherless lad, he prepared him with anxious care for his first Communion—an event received with a transport of rapture too intense (the Abbé feared) to be a lasting force. The same receptivity of impressions, good or bad, finds another early instance in the visit to Villers-Cotterets of a certain Auguste Lafarge. This young man, articled to a lawyer in Paris, had returned on a visit to his native place. Fashionably dressed, possessing or claiming to possess some acquaintance with Parisian celebrities, and spreading around him that glamour of the capital so dazzling to provincial eyes, he seemed to Dumas the embodiment of all that was admirable. Lafarge patronized the boy, arranged a bird-catching expedition on a grand scale, and paid for everything in a lordly manner and with an appearance of wealth which " gave me," says Dumas, " my first lesson in regardless profusion. Readers of *Monte Cristo* will know whether I profited by it." Alas (we are inclined to add) the lesson was only too well remembered, and if we owe to it the magnificent Count, it was possibly also responsible for many other debts of a less pleasant nature. In another way the same Lafarge was influential. Having a taste for versification he composed and circulated an epigram relative to a certain young lady who had slighted his advances. This

epigram of eight lines was an eight days' wonder to Villers-Cotterets, and first suggested to Dumas the idea of fame—the pleasure of being talked about. Having sown these seeds, Lafarge departed, and Alexandre resumed his orthodox lessons after vainly urging the Abbé to teach him French verse-making instead of Latin.

Of his education in its wider sense, there is another part proper to be mentioned. For active exercise of every sort he was always eager, and except for an innate horror of precipitous heights he had all the fearlessness of a healthy boy whose natural element is the open air. His early diversions in the way of bird-catching, generally undertaken in company with the famous Boudoux, have been already referred to. He was now outgrowing that elementary form of *la chasse*, and his whole delight was in firearms, the surreptitious use of which more than once nearly got him into trouble. Chafing at this indignity of the little boy who is forbidden to touch, and remembering his visit to Abbé Fortier, he yearned to join the company of real and recognized sportsmen. It was a concession to be gained from the mother, partly by entreaty, partly by diplomatic allusions to the late General's love of sport, and finally granted on the promise of their neighbour, M. Picot, that he would keep a careful eye upon the beginner. Of that first day's shooting and the first bird that fell to his gun Dumas speaks a truth attested probably by common experience when he affirms that later life brought no pleasure more keen or less disappointing. Many other "shoots" followed—big *battues* with plenty of hares to be killed and plenty of amusing incidents to be recorded by a writer who took care to make them amusing even at his own expense. Sometimes he was admitted under the auspices of M. Déviolaine to *la chasse* on a larger scale, on one of those occasions when the In-

spector gave orders to kill off some of the wild pigs which still inhabited the forest. Then to the excitement of the hunt was added an element of danger, with gamekeepers and dogs marshalled at their various places, in regular campaign as it were against the formidable enemy. Dumas, we may observe—though it became the fashion hereafter to discount his achievements in this as in other directions—was always a good sportsman, according to French ideas. He could bring down his game as well as another, he was an expert in the shooting galleries, and a very fair performer with sword or pistol when "honour" required him either to give or demand satisfaction. And certainly his reminiscences of these early days make the most agreeable reading, flavoured with a spice of that exaggeration which is the vested right of sporting narrative, but indicating clearly the participator and not the mere chronicler. This is not, however, to disparage the chronicler, who does full justice to the theme, and is full of picturesque touches or quaint otiose illustrations which differentiate him from the ordinary. Who but Dumas, for example, would think of describing "three hares proceeding to the hollow where I lay concealed, advancing at unequal distances from one another *like the three Curiatii*"? Hear him again, relating how, having wounded a hare and being resolved not to lose him, after much vain pursuit and a noise which made the rest of the party furious, "I at last got hold of him, first by one paw, then by two, then round the body, and made my way back, hugging the creature to my breast *as Hercules did with Antaeus*." Hear him once more about a boar hunt, in which one of the keepers, thinking he had killed the beast, was sitting proudly on the carcase, "*suggesting the picture of another Meleager and the boar of Calydon*," when suddenly the animal, only stunned at first and now revived by the docking

of its tail, sprang up and precipitated its conqueror in the dust. All this is written with the ease and heartiness of Dumas' best manner, than which no higher praise is possible. Nor must it be forgotten—to mingle graver things with gay—that whatever instincts of physical energy the boy had inherited from his father found their development in this exuberant life of Nature. How many nights passed in some lonely hut in preparation for the morrow's sport, while in the glades of the forest the moon shone and the stars were seen far above through a canopy of foliage! How many a talk with this forester or that (their names are recorded and their ways)—a silent genuine class of men for whose companionship, as for that of sailors, with whom he compares them, Dumas had such a fondness! Hence reflection was fed and imagination quickened; hence that love of nature, that distaste for mere city life, that vagrant passion for travels and voyages which were observed in the Dumas of later years. Hence too, if the inference be not far-fetched, some part of that elastic, buoyant air which pervades all his works and saves even the most manufactured from ever seeming mechanical.

Such were the scenes of Dumas' boyhood, which may be considered to cease with two events commonly marking the change to youth. First of these was the lad's apprenticeship, at the beginning of 1818, to the local notary, M. Mennesson, whose office he entered nominally as "third clerk," in reality on the understanding that he should make himself generally useful and pick up the elements of his profession. The duties of this post consisted chiefly in carrying documents for signature to people in the neighbouring villages—an occupation which, time being no object, allowed the new apprentice to do some shooting on the way. To the law, in this shape at least, Dumas had no objection. He was in-

different to his future, provided that it was not to be a Seminary; and Maître Mennesson's office was quite the reverse—the notary being an ardent Republican and Voltairean, with two especial abominations, the Bourbons and the priests.

One other event marks the same epoch in our friend's life. He fell in love for the first time, by no means for the last. It happened in this wise. Among other young people who came to Villers-Cotterets for the Whitsuntide festival were a niece of Abbé Grégoire and a girl friend of hers, Parisians both of them. To this pair Dumas was allocated by the Abbé to do them the honours of the place, including a promenade in the park and a dance upon the grass. The elegance of the young ladies drew many glances to them and their squire. Unhappily in his case these glances indicated amusement rather than admiration. His attire, it seems, was the cause of this merriment—a bright blue coat and nankeen breeches, the latter fitting ill and giving a curiously old-fashioned appearance to their young wearer. Realizing these facts, and perceiving that his fair companions were more or less diverted at his expense, poor Dumas became very miserable. Everything went wrong on this unlucky day. When he sought to impress the Parisians with his skill by jumping a ditch, the result was that he split his clothes and had to hasten home for repairs. When the time for dancing came he had forgotten his gloves, or had never thought of them, and was only saved by the happy chance of a friend with an extra pair. Finally, though he acquitted himself creditably in the valse, he was unlucky enough to admit to his partner that he had hitherto been allowed only to dance with chairs. This confession was too much for her gravity, and she fairly laughed outright, as she exclaimed, "You *are* a funny boy." Mortifying ex-

periences these through which many a youth at the beginning of the self-conscious stage has passed, though probably few have utilized them so adroitly as Dumas afterwards did in his story of *Ange Pitou*. The immediate result, he explains, was to convince him that he was in love—not with any particular person, but in the abstract with woman in general, and perhaps not a little with himself. And so, as the Parisian girls soon departed, he found a sweetheart in a girl of the place called Adèle Dalvin, with whom he kept "company" until expediency or inclination constrained her to marry some one else. These incidents, narrated with a *naiveté* which quite equals the *Confessions* of Rousseau, reveal a sensitiveness common indeed to all at that period of life but, in Dumas' case so much a part of his nature as to make the praise or blame of others a matter always of the highest consequence.

So far he had passed on the whole an easy and a happy time, taking things as they came, ruffled for a moment by a touch of vague ambition or a twinge of conscious inferiority, but giving as yet no signs, either to himself or others, of what his future was to be.

CHAPTER II

THE YOUTH

(1818–1824)

THE first distinct literary influence experienced by Dumas came from the arrival in Villers-Cotterets of young Adolphe de Leuven, who with his father the Comte Ribbing de Leuven—a Swedish nobleman exiled from his country—was a guest of the Collards. The two youths soon became friends. They were nearly of an age, and were attracted to one another by diversity of experiences. Adolphe, who had lived chiefly in Brussels and in Paris, knew all about cities and politics; in rural matters Dumas was the master. Young de Leuven—afterwards a prolific writer of *vaudevilles* and comic operas, and best known as the author of *Vert-vert* and *Le Postillon de Longjumeau*—already had literary ambitions. These he confided to his friend, and soon a tacit partnership of ideas was formed between the two, interrupted for a while by Adolphe's departure but soon to bear fruit. Convinced of ignorance Dumas now set himself to learn. Fortunately an instructor was at hand in the person of Amadée de la Ponce, a good-natured officer of hussars who happened to be staying in the town, and voluntarily gave the lawyer's clerk lessons in Italian and German. Abbé Grégoire's tuition had ceased since his pupil entered the notary's office, and now its place was taken by more agreeable studies. Italian approached

with a knowledge of French and a foundation of Latin presented little difficulty, one of the sources from which Dumas imbibed it being Foscolo's romance, afterwards translated by him as *Dernières Lettres de Jacopo Ortis*. German involved a more serious struggle, and was only persevered with through the urgency of La Ponce, whose services in impressing the necessity of "Work—work—work" are acknowledged with the warmest feeling. Even so the language of Goethe never became to Dumas more than a readable one, whereas that of Dante grew into a second mother-tongue.

Close upon these two friendships followed an event still more definite in its bearing upon his career. The three clerks in M. Mennesson's office, having come in for a gratuity from some high-minded client, resolved to club together and spend this windfall at Soissons on their next holiday. Thither accordingly they went, starting betimes by the night *diligence* from Paris, which passed through Villers-Cotterets at 3.30 a.m. What other attractions Soissons may have offered we know not, but the chief was obviously the theatre, where just then a company of Conservatoire pupils was performing a tragedy called *Hamlet* by an author called Ducis. So the play-bill announced. The word "tragedy" was indeed rather appalling: lawyers' clerks out for the night would no doubt have preferred something lighter—a comedy or an opera bouffe. To Dumas the word suggested only certain works of Corneille and Racine which his mother had vainly tried to make him read. Otherwise his mind was void of all prejudice. He knew nothing of Hamlet or of Ducis, still less that this was only an adaptation from Shakespeare in which the French playwright—trammelled by conventions to which he was himself superior (as the letters of Ducis show)—had sought to smooth over

the crudities of the original by certain doctorings in the approved "classic" style. Such as it was, the play affected Dumas in a way which he can only describe by vague terms, such as "stupendous," "mysterious flashes," "indefinite longings," and so forth: his attitude was not one of criticism, but simply of amazement. Immediately on returning home he wrote to Paris for a copy of the play and at once learnt off the part of Hamlet. "The demon of poetry," he says, "was now awakened in me and would give me no rest." It quite expelled whatever spirit of acquiescence in his legal duties Dumas might otherwise have attained to; and Maître Mennesson and many others shook their heads over the presumed fate of this unsettled idler. Just then, to make things worse, Adolphe de Leuven came back. For the last six months he had been staying in Paris at the house of M. Arnault, one of those dramatists who during the Empire and the first years of the Restoration kept up the supply of mediocre tragedies modelled on the classic tradition, and who have been somewhat unkindly styled "The Pseudo-classicists." Living under the roof of the author of *Germanicus* and *Marius à Minturnes*, Adolphe's dramatic tastes had naturally been fostered. He had become familiar with the literary and theatrical world: he had even got so far as to read a play of his own to the manager of the Gymnase, and this effort, though rejected, had given him a certain footing among the profession. With such credentials he returned to Villers-Cotterets, chiefly, it seems, for the purpose of enlisting Dumas' help. Let it be noticed in passing that in this, his first partnership—as in most of his later ones—Dumas was the sought, not the seeker. Clearly even at this stage of ignorance and simplicity, he must have revealed some signs of a literary value to the friend who, himself well educated and well placed, wanted his help.

The two amateurs laid their heads together in many walks and talks, and at last they excogitated a piece. The dominant note of this time, to which every literary aspirant would pay heed, was a pronounced Chauvinism—a revulsion against the humiliations of 1814 and 1815. Fickle France was already tired of the Bourbon king reintroduced, as men reflected, by foreign bayonets; and patriotic feeling reverted to the glories of preceding years. An illustration of this is supplied by the popularity of Casimir Delavigne, certainly a dramatist of taste and skill, but hardly the man to create a fervour not otherwise existent. A poet who to some extent interpreted his age, he benefited still more by the liberal interpretation which his age put upon him. His *Vêpres Siciliennes*, performed at the Odéon in November 1819, owed its sensational success chiefly to some lines referring—vaguely enough, it must be confessed, if read apart from politics—to "freedom," "equal rights," and "popular sovereignty"; and the play was regarded as a manifesto of the Liberal Opposition. Reflecting a similar sentiment and appealing even more to popular taste were the *chansons* of Béranger. The young collaborators naturally fell in with this prevailing tone—exploited, for that matter, in scores of similar pieces—and they constructed a patriotic *vaudeville*, entitled *Le Major de Strasbourg*. There was no particular reason, says Dumas, why *The Major* should hail from Strasbourg rather than from anywhere else; but "he belonged to the numerous family of worthy retired officers whose patriotism continued to beat the enemy in high-sounding verse, and to avenge the battles of Leipzig and Waterloo on the battlefields of the Gymnase and the Variétés." The chief thing that Dumas remembers about his own share in this work was a scene in which the hero—a kind of Cincinnatus—having relinquished for the

moment his plough, is discovered to be reading. His visitors as they approach speculate on the nature of the book—a problem which one of them thus solves :

> Mon père, il lit " la Dernière Campagne "
> Car de ses yeux je vois couler de pleurs.

The situation and the lines appeared admirable to Adolphe and others. Dumas pleasantly confesses how his vanity was tickled by their compliments (" You all know the vain side of my character "), and how, imagining he had done some great thing, he dreamed of an open path to fame, strewn with garlands and gold. *The Major* being finished, the two friends continued to work vigorously in order that De Leuven, who was soon to return to Paris, might have a cargo of works to take with him. Another vaudeville followed, based on one of Bouilly's *Contes à ma fille*, and called *Le Dîner d'Amis*. But their great and ambitious effort was a drama derived from Florian and entitled *Les Abencérages*, a subject of singular attraction to authors at that time and familiar in all grades of literary merit, from Chateaubriand downwards. None of these early works saw the light of publicity, and Dumas, admitting them valueless, recalls them only from a sentiment of personal interest. His hopes indeed were doomed to speedy disappointment. De Leuven from Paris wrote at first dubiously—then definitely, giving the reasons which induced theatrical managers to " decline with thanks." In the case of *Les Abencérages*, several other plays on the same subject had been accepted there ten or fifteen years ago and not yet produced ; of the vaudevilles one was deficient in plot, the other resembled too much a recent piece. The only consolation De Leuven could offer was that he had several strings to his bow, and if with any of his various partners he could bring off a

success, the reputation thus gained might influence managers to reconsider *Le Major de Strasbourg* and *Le Dîner d'Amis*. But he was instant for Dumas to come to Paris : thus only could their joint labours be fruitful. "To Paris"—there was no need to paint its advantages : Dumas' imagination realized them all and more. For Paris his spirit yearned ; but how to get there ?

A chance occurred in the promotion about this time of M. Déviolaine from Villers-Cotterets to Paris, to take over the general management of the Orleans forests. As a friend and connexion of the family he might have been expected to find some post in his offices for young Dumas, whose mother begged him to do so. But M. Déviolaine, in whose eyes literature only ceased to be a crime when it had become a success, had of late regarded his young relative with an ever-deepening disgust. With his usual frankness he characterized him as an "idle scoundrel," and probably thought in all sincerity that Paris would be sufficient to complete his ruin. Therefore he would promise nothing, but merely said, "We will see."

At this juncture an offer came which Madame Dumas, pressed by poverty, was fain to accept for her son—a clerkship in the office of a notary at Crépy, the remuneration of which was board and lodging. M. Lefèvre, the notary in question, was a man of elegant and fashionable ways, who did not allow his clients to forget that he, a Parisian, honoured a country town by residing and practising in it. To his clerks he was lofty but strictly just, and so far as material necessities went Dumas had no cause to complain—comfortably housed, well fed, and lightly worked. But Crépy, the ancient capital of Valois, its glory long since departed, was a very different thing from Paris, and seemed duller even than Villers-Cotterets to one now thoroughly restless and

discontented with the prospect of a humdrum provincial life. And meanwhile Adolphe de Leuven kept summoning him to Paris. The outcome of this position was an episode, or escapade, which terminated abruptly the three months' residence at Crépy. One of M. Lefèvre's habits—and one which made him specially enviable to Dumas—was to take a trip every six weeks or so to the capital. Whether on business or pleasure bent he took these journeys always in the style of a gentleman, not using the humble *diligence*, but travelling in postchaise with liveried postillions; the day and hour of his return were left for his clerks to conjecture. Now it happened that on a Saturday in November, when M. Lefèvre was about to start on one of his periodical trips, a certain Paillet—who had been with Dumas in M. Mennesson's office—called at Crépy to look up his friend. The opportunity of the notary's absence was favourable. Why not use it to make a little excursion to Paris on their own account? M. Lefèvre generally stayed away not less than three days. Paillet being willing, it became a question of funds. Dumas could only produce seven francs, his friend had twenty-eight: the two together would barely pay the coach fare to Paris. But Dumas, resourceful already in the devices of romance, was ready with an idea. He had a gun, Paillet had a horse: they would ride and walk alternately, and as the ground was well stocked with game it would be strange if they could not bag enough to support themselves and their beast. Gamekeepers of course would have to be reckoned with: this too was provided for. On the alarm being given the one who was in front with his gun would fall back and change places with the one on horseback, who, taking the incriminating game, would canter off; the other was to walk leisurely along and deal with the gamekeeper, either by argument or by bribery. All things

happened according to calculation. The raiders duly reached Paris, laden with thirty francs' worth of hares and partridges, and put up at an hotel in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, where the landlord, an acquaintance of Paillet, agreed to accept payment in kind instead of in cash, on being informed that the two friends had made a wager to go to Paris and back without spending a penny. To complete the dramatic fitness of this narrative it seems that they ought to have run into M. Lefèvre's arms on their arrival in Paris; but a different fate awaited them. Next morning Paillet went off on his own affairs, while Dumas with his one fixed idea started to visit De Leuven. Passing by the Théâtre Français he observed that the play advertised for that evening was M. De Jouy's *Sylla*, with Talma in the title part, clearly a thing to be seen at all costs. Reaching the De Leuvens' house at about 8 a.m. he found his friend still in bed, and rousing him up, surprised at this early and unexpected call, explained why and how he had come. Adolphe, who knew Talma and could see him any day, exhibited what seemed to Dumas a lamentable lack of enthusiasm; still he offered to accompany his friend to Talma's for the purpose of asking orders for the play. They proceeded to the actor's house —next door to that of Mademoiselle Mars and that of Mademoiselle Duchesnois—and were admitted to his dressing-room. The famous tragedian, engaged in ablutions, presented a homely and somewhat unpoetic figure. But he received the young men kindly, signed the desired order, and said a few cordial words to the one whom Adolphe introduced as the son of General Alexandre Dumas. The remembrance of this first meeting led Dumas, when he wrote his *Memoirs*, to apostrophize the occasion with regrets that Talma's life ended before his own dramatic career began. What fine parts, he reflects, would his plays have supplied

to that famous actor always seeking new creations! This speculation on what might have been, if natural, is somewhat futile. There is no real evidence that Talma was dissatisfied either with the classic repertory or with the pieces, however jejune, of his own period—the Revolution and the Empire. The great actor—and Talma was one of the greatest—skilled to shine by contrast, does not always miss high literary or dramatic excellence in a play. Nor again, considering Talma's characteristics—his naturalness of elocution, his dignity, his reserve of passion—does it seem certain that he would have found his fulfilment in those modern and melodramatic parts of which Bocage, Lemaître, Mélingue, and others made so much. This, however, by the way; for Talma died in 1826, three years before the advent of Dumas as a serious dramatist. On the present occasion, hugging to his breast the precious order signed "Talma," Dumas came out rejoicing, and having made an appointment with De Leuven to meet before the theatre at the Café du Roi, he proceeded to spend the day in the country cousin's round of sight-seeing, this being apparently his first visit to Paris since the one (narrated above) in 1814. Reaching the café in good time that evening, he found himself in a kind of Bohemian literary club—where, seated at little tables with their *petits verres* in front of them, men were busy scribbling away, deriving inspiration, it seemed, from the movement and noise around them. It was curious that one of the first on whom his eye lighted was his old acquaintance Lafarge, whose smartness had so delighted him a few years ago—alas! no longer smart, but seedy and out at elbows. Lafarge had failed to meet with a wife whose dowry would have enabled him to buy a notary's practice: he had given up that profession and had lapsed into the precarious shifts of tentative literature. His views of men and things had

taken a correspondingly sombre tinge. If Dumas was burning to see Talma play, Lafarge could assure him that Talma was played out and would soon cease to draw : the success of *Sylla* was due to no merit of author or actor, but simply to the Napoleonic make-up : if the papers said otherwise everybody knew how the papers were written and nobody believed a word of them. To Dumas this cynical tone was a mystery, until De Leuven, who soon arrived, enlightened his innocence as they walked to the Français by pointing out that it is the way of the world for failure to cavil at success, and for those whose stomachs are empty to begrudge those who have dined well—an element in the philosophy of life which Dumas noted now and verified hereafter. That evening, with ardour unquenched by Lafarge's douche of cold water, he enjoyed the theatre immensely. Everything pleased him—the crowded house, the applause, the fine acting of Talma, especially in the last scene, when the Dictator voluntarily abdicates the power given him by the Senate. To crown all—when the curtain fell, Adolphe took him behind the scenes to Talma's dressing-room, in which surrounding the actor were gathered several prominent playwrights of the day—De Jouy himself, Delavigne, Soumet, Arnault, Lemercier. Here was enacted the sequel to *Sylla*, an epilogue of personal interest. For Talma, noticing young Dumas as he stood abashed near the door, called him forward, and asked him how he had enjoyed the evening, and told him he must come again to some other play. Then this dialogue—

Dumas : Unhappily I must go back to-morrow to the country to my office, for I am a lawyer's clerk.

Talma : No need to be ashamed of that, young man. Corneille was a lawyer's clerk. (Turning to the company.) Gentlemen, let me present to you a future Corneille.

Dumas : Touch my forehead, sir, it will bring me luck.

Talma (putting his hand on Dumas' head, and with his best histrionic air) : So be it ! I baptize thee Poet in the name of Shakespeare, Corneille, and Schiller. Return now to your office, and be sure your proper vocation will find you wherever you are.

Dumas blushed—we can well believe it. He would gladly have kissed Talma's fingers, and the latter, giving him a cordial handshake, observed, " Come, come—this lad has enthusiasm : he will do something yet."

From a situation thus embarrassing and fast verging on the ridiculous the two friends were saved by a speedy exit. Once outside, Dumas turned to De Leuven and said : " Yes, I shall come to Paris, you may be sure of that."

But before this fateful resolution could be carried out certain preliminaries, neither very easy nor pleasant, had to be gone through. In the first place, it was necessary to return to Crépy. The return was accomplished much as the journey out had been ; but on reaching Crépy at mid-day on Wednesday Dumas found that M. Lefèvre had preceded him by a few hours. Stepping into the office he sat down to his desk and waited events. The day's work went forward as usual ; the chief came in and out of the room, but said not a word. It was not till dinner was over that he requested his clerk to walk into his study, and introduced the subject by this question.

" May I ask, M. Dumas, if you have any knowledge of mechanics ? "

Alexandre thought he knew something of it in practice, though not in theory.

" Very good," continued M. Lefèvre in his suavely sardonic tone, " you will doubtless, then, be aware that, for a machine to work properly, every one of its wheels must

contribute to the general movement." He then applied the parable to his clerk, who, being a wheel—a very small wheel—in the business machine, had for the last three days stopped working and had so far deranged the action of the whole. This warning, he added, was only meant to be provisional; but the clerk—his head somewhat turned by the scenes he had just left—treated his employer in the most haughty, not to say impudent fashion, and intimated that he preferred to consider it a notice of dismissal. "As you like, of course," said the notary. So the interview ended, and next morning Dumas said good-bye to Crépy.

Preliminary number one was thus got over. The next—for he had mapped out the details of his course—was to soothe and win over his mother, who, though her son did not at first reveal the fact, guessed pretty well that he would not return to M. Lefèvre. To her, motherlike, the pleasure of having her boy home again outweighed the vexation of his conduct. At the same time she pointed out to him that their resources had now reached the vanishing point. Even this melancholy fact concurred—as all things concurred—to help the adventurer on his path. A desperate position excused an otherwise desperate folly, and Dumas was able more easily to break to his mother his intention of going to Paris to seek his fortune and hers. His plan was simplicity itself. There were several military men, old friends and acquaintances of his father (as letters in his possession showed), who had found salvation in the new régime, and now occupied important posts under the government. To these he would apply, and surely it would be no great matter for one or other of them to assist the son of an old comrade-in-arms to earn £50 a year. This secured, he himself would do the rest. It would have been useless to argue: Madame Dumas acquiesced. Then came

the question of ready money. For this also an expedient was found in the sale of two engravings which had belonged to the General, and which now met with a purchaser at fifty francs. It would be a pity to draw on this modest little sum for the *diligence* fare to Paris. So Dumas thought, and such also was clearly the view of Providence. Otherwise how account for the following remarkable series of events? Returning home, jingling his fifty francs in his pockets, he meets friend Cartier, proprietor of the Villers-Cotterets posting-house. Cartier and Dumas have often played billiards together—fairly matched, and each fancying he can give the other a few points. A game is proposed, and the stakes are two *petits verres* of absinthe—the said absinthe being merely a measure of value, for Dumas is careful to inform us that he never touched that liquor in those days or afterwards. They play—the Russian game of thirty-six points up—and the young one wins. Again with the same result—and again, his opponent becoming ever more flurried and more obstinate, and the stakes being doubled each time. In short "we played for *five consecutive hours*, at the end of which I had won from Cartier *six hundred glasses of* absinthe." Then a bargain is made, Dumas agreeing to consider this oceanic debt as cancelled if Cartier will give him his coach fare: the other consents, and so the great question of how to get to Paris for nothing is solved in a manner worthy of the best romance.

Elated by the favour of fortune, Dumas took next the very sensible step of providing himself with an introduction to the Deputy of his Department—no less a person than General Foy, who after distinguished service in war had now become one of the most popular Opposition members of the Chamber. For this purpose he called on M. Danré, a neighbouring farmer, whose electioneering help had largely

won the General his seat. Danré knew the Dumas family, and he listened with interest to the glowing prospects of his young visitor, readily wrote the requisite letter of introduction, and even came to see Madame Dumas that he might reconcile her to her son's departure. Three days later, with fifty francs of cash in his pocket and an unlimited fund of hope in his heart, Alexandre reached Paris, where his friends the De Leuvens were glad to put him up, though sceptical of any practical result. He had brought of course the old letters of his father—and the most important of these seemed to be from the Duc de Bellune, now Minister of War, better known by his former name of Marshal Victor. To him without delay an epistle was composed and sent. So sanguine was Dumas of a favourable reply that he rather resented De Leuven's sensible advice to put other irons in the fire. Still he took the advice, and, wishing to ascertain the addresses of Marshal Jourdan and General Sebastiani, was about to invest five francs in a directory. Again the practical Adolphe dissuaded him from an outlay quite superfluous in the case of an article so easily accessible, and again Dumas' impetuous optimism revolted against the seeming cynicism of his friend. Having found what he wanted, he betook himself next morning to the residence of Marshal Jourdan in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. The Marshal on hearing his visitor's name had expected apparently to see his old comrade: of the son's existence he had never heard, and remained politely incredulous throughout a ten minutes' inspection. Crestfallen, Dumas next waited on General Sebastiani in the Rue Saint-Honoré. The General was in his study, dictating to four secretaries seated at the four corners of the room, each of whom presented to him as he passed by in his promenade a gold snuff-box, from which he graciously

took a pinch. The visit to Sebastiani was as fruitless as, and even briefer than, that to Jourdan. Dumas began to perceive that the good deeds of the father are not always visited upon the children, especially when times have changed and republics have become monarchies; and his opinion of human nature sank. A third visit was more cheering—this time to General Verdier, a veteran who lived on a modest fourth-floor in the Faubourg Montmartre and occupied himself in painting battle pictures. Great was the contrast between these humble surroundings and the palatial abodes of Jourdan and Sebastiani, greater still between the reception in this case and in those. Verdier, poor man, —himself shelved and without influence—could do nothing except give the lad a cordial welcome, invite him to dinner, and wish him good luck with the patron he had not yet approached, General Foy. It may be attributed either to the guilelessness or to the filial affection of Dumas that he had put his first and chief faith in the men who had been friendly with and perhaps indebted to his father, rather than in one to whom he was accredited by commendation from a living and influential friend. His order of proceeding seems at any rate foreordained as the one best adapted to narration, leading up as it does from failure to success. For General Foy, his most substantial hope, was now his last. Receiving his visitor courteously, the General (who was engaged, with books, plans and charts in front of him, in writing his history of the Peninsular War), after a few preliminary remarks, put Dumas through a sort of catechism designed to find out what he was good for. An unpleasant process, it may be imagined. "Mathematics?" — "Physics?" — "Latin?" — "Greek?" — "Book-keeping?"—each question elicited a reluctant negative qualified only by some slight confidence in Italian. The

General himself found the position painful, and ended by telling his visitor to write down and leave his name and address, and he would see what could be done. Just then a marvellous thing happened. Hardly had Dumas formed the letters of his name when the General uttered an exclamation of surprise and delight. "You write a most excellent hand," said he. Yet—strange perversity—this tribute to the merits of the Villers-Cotterets writing-master seemed to Dumas the greatest humiliation of all; "a capital handwriting"—the hall-mark of incapacity! His patron, however, little guessing this thought, promised to speak that very evening to the Duc d'Orléans with a view to getting a clerkship. The Duke's Liberal tendencies might predispose him to the son of a Republican General, and his connexion with Villers-Cotterets might add to the appropriateness of the favour. So it proved; for when Dumas returned next morning General Foy was able to announce the promise of a post as supernumerary clerk in the Secretarial department of the Palais Royal, with a salary of twelve hundred francs. Dumas' delight was unbounded: he was in love and charity with all things—even with his own terribly excellent handwriting. This fifty-pound clerkship, due to the influence of General Foy and probably also in part to M. Déviolaine, gave him just the *pied-à-terre* he wanted. "Ah! General," he said to his benefactor, "I am going to live by my penmanship now, but some day, I promise you, I shall live by my pen"—a prophecy amply justified, if not suggested, by later events. Foy kept the young man to luncheon, gave him some good advice, and listened to his outpouring of literary schemes with all the indulgence of one who has heard many such things before. Adolphe de Leuven fully shared his friend's joy. But there were others who would be still more affected by it, and nothing would satisfy Dumas but

that he should return home at once and bear the good news in person. Whether the cost of this journey also was defrayed from the famous six hundred *petits-verres* we know not; in any case Dumas was the last man to think of expense. So he set off that very afternoon, and reaching Villers-Cotterets in the small hours of the night, awakened his mother by rushing into her room with cries of "Victory! victory!!!"

Next morning his triumphal "Veni, vidi, vici," spread rapidly over the town. M. Danré was visited and thanked; Abbé Grégoire too; and all the gossips of the place, hitherto unanimous prophets of evil, now came flocking to Madame Dumas with congratulations upon a success which they of course had always predicted. A few busy and happy days were thus spent before Dumas returned to Paris to begin life in earnest.

He was now in his twenty-first year, an interesting and romantic young man, six feet tall and well made, rather slim than otherwise (strange as this may appear to those familiar with portraits of him in later life); his feet and hands were small and delicate—a fact of which he was sufficiently proud; the hair was long, dark and curly, the complexion still fresh. It was only as time went on that the one assumed that frizzy aspect, and the other that deep dull tint which—inherited from the coloured lady of St. Domingo—became pronounced enough to offer a mark for various personal witticisms, such as Nodier's observation (*à propos* of Dumas' liking for uniforms and decorations), "How fond of toys you negroes are!" or that caustic and probably apocryphal saying attributed to the younger Dumas, "My father is so vain that he is capable of mounting behind his own carriage, if only to make people think that he keeps a black servant!" But no feature of Dumas,

either now or in mature life, struck people so much as his eyes—bright, quizzing eyes, vivacious outposts of a vivacious brain—eyes that twinkled merrily through the ups and downs of nearly threescore years and ten.

On reaching his old quarters in Paris at the hotel in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, his first concern was to look about for a lodging; nor was he long in securing a fourth story bed-sitting room in the Place des Italiens for the modest rent of 120 francs per annum. Having still a day or two's grace before beginning his clerkly duties, he lounged about the Boulevards, where everything was new, and, passing rich on fifty pounds a year, he thought he might treat himself one evening to the play. He chose the Porte Saint-Martin theatre, which was then performing a drama called *The Vampire*. That evening, by Dumas' own account, must be enrolled among notable nights at the play. Fresh to the ways of Paris, he began by paying a franc for a place in the *queue*, imagining that this would take him into the theatre. The illusion being rudely dispelled, and another franc and a half expended for a seat in the pit, he found himself in the midst of a noisy gang of fellows—the *claque*, as he afterwards discovered—who amused themselves by insulting questions as to who was his tailor, or when he had last had his hair cut. Indignant he turned upon the offenders, and was at once pounced upon by the officials of the theatre and ejected for causing a disturbance. "Finding myself in the street I reflected that it was a stupid thing to go away without seeing the play, and that, as I had already gone to the expense of two places, I might as well go in for a third"—a thoroughly Dumasesque piece of reasoning, this latter. So he purchased another ticket, this time for the orchestra stalls, and reappeared smiling in the lobby. The society in this part of the house was more

polite than that of the pit, and Dumas perceived that he was seated next to a middle-aged gentleman of benign aspect, engrossed in the reading of a dainty little volume, which inspection showed to be *Le Pastissier François* and to bear the magic impress of " Louis and Daniel Elzevir, Amsterdam, 1655." Attracted by the title with its suggestion of delicate cookery, the ingenuous youth ventured to put a question. Hence a conversation which, beginning with the subject of eggs and the various modes of serving them up, soon diverged into Elzevirs, bibliomaniacs, *claqueurs*, vampires, and what not. This conversation, beginning before the rise of the curtain, was pursued during the intervals of the play—a weird sensational drama with supernatural beings flitting across the stage, cryptic utterances of melancholy, deep-toned men, and a general flesh-creeping atmosphere of mystery and horror. Dumas thought it very fine —indeed, he traced back to this evening the first idea of his own *Don Juan de Marana*. Not so his neighbour, whose attitude was remarkable. He had apparently come to scoff, and whenever he turned his attention from his Elzevir to the stage it was to signify his feelings by occasional loud expressions of disapproval—very conspicuous among an audience sympathetic with the play. Finally, in the course of the third act, professing that he could no longer sit out so inept a piece he left his seat; and Dumas was sorry to lose a neighbour whose extensive and peculiar knowledge had enlightened him on such a variety of topics. But before the play had proceeded much further, suddenly at a most critical point of the dialogue a loud prolonged hiss was heard from one of the private boxes. Every one turned towards the sound, and Dumas was not altogether surprised to discern the features of his late companion who had sought that new vantage-point whence to damn the piece most

decisively. The offender was of course expelled, and the performance went on peaceably to its end. Next day the newspapers, recording the incident, mentioned that the ejected person was the well-known Charles Nodier, believed himself to be one of the anonymous authors of *The Vampire*, who had used this original method of criticizing either the work of his partners or his own, probably the latter. For Nodier's eccentricity was not less than his erudition. Novelist, scholar, bibliophile, naturalist, master of style and slave of paradox, the author of *Jean Sbogar* and of *Smarra* was at once the earliest pioneer of Romanticism and the keenest critic of its extravagances. He may be regarded either as an elegant trifler who played with every form of literary art and patronized every new development until, by becoming serious, it lost his sympathy; or else as a profound philosopher who, considering literature as the vainest of vanities, deprecated with pleasant irony the assumption that books and their makers are really of supreme consequence in the scheme of things. Nodier at any rate was soon to become a good friend to the young man whose acquaintance he made in so strange a fashion.

On the following Monday Dumas began his professional duties. He had discovered that neither his hair nor his garments were of the Parisian cut: the services therefore of a *coiffeur* and a tailor were requisitioned, the former of whom did his work so thoroughly that "whereas with my long hair I had resembled one of those pomatum-dealers who use their own heads as an advertisement, with my hair cropped short I was like nothing so much as a seal." Thus prepared he mounted the stairs leading to his office in one of the courts of the Palais Royal. His *chef de bureau*, M. Oudard, received him graciously, referring to the recommendations of General Foy and M. Dévioline. The latter irascible gentle-

man, who occupied an adjoining office, was now his close neighbour, and took an early opportunity of cautioning his young relative against any further indulgence in "trumpery verses and rubbishy plays." When Dumas replied with spirit that this was his very purpose in coming to Paris, vast was M. Déviolaine's contempt.

"*You*, with your education at three francs a month—do *you* think you are going to become a Corneille or a Racine, or a Voltaire?"

Dumas modestly opined that he might still discover some path of literature untrodden; and the interview ended, as usual, in fury on the one side and a hasty retreat on the other—both quite farcical. There was plenty of sting, however, in that taunt about a poor education, and though Dumas' plans when he arrived in Paris were vague in the extreme, he had two fixed purposes—first of which was to repair his ignorance by study, and then to become a dramatist. Fortunately for the first purpose his immediate superior was a literary and sympathetic gentleman called Lassagne, who not only instructed the newcomer in his office duties, but advised him what to read, and suggested even now that in the history of France, neglected by French novelists, a rich material for imaginative work might be found. Meanwhile to copy letters in his best handwriting, to fold and seal the same when signed, these simple mechanical duties the new clerk performed to the satisfaction of M. Oudard, of M. de Broval (the Director-General), and of the Duc d'Orléans himself, for whom he executed some private and confidential work so successfully that he was promoted from a supernumerary to a regular clerkship, and his salary was raised from twelve to fifteen hundred francs. In occasional interviews with the man who was afterwards to become King Louis Philippe, Dumas was impressed with

the Duke's shrewdness and the attention he gave to every detail of his affairs. To his employees he was affable, without abating his dignity or showing as yet any signs of that ostentatious simplicity by which later on he tried to harmonize Republicanism with Monarchy. The hours of the Bureau—10.30 to 5, with occasional evening work—were not excessive, and beyond the inevitable monotony of routine Dumas had nothing to complain of. He was really a very fortunate young man.

CHAPTER III

STUDY AND EFFORT

(1824–1828)

CONVENIENTLY for Dumas the Théâtre Français was close at hand, and as orders for this house were pretty plentiful in the establishment of the Duc d'Orléans he was able to visit the theatre frequently, thus combining amusement with a knowledge of the stage necessary to a would-be dramatist. At the same time his friend Lassagne prescribed for his reading a wholesale course of literature—from Homer to Byron, from Froissart to Sir Walter Scott, which might well appal the more delicate and selective appetites of the present day. How much of it all Dumas got through there is no direct evidence to show; it is certain that he read plenty of fiction and poetry, English and German chiefly, in translations (for he had but a moderate understanding of those languages). Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Byron, Fenimore Cooper, Scott, are all mentioned among the studies of his self-education; of these, Schiller and Scott were undoubtedly the most fruitful hereafter. In the case of Sir Walter, the delight experienced at the first reading of *Ivanhoe* was only a prelude to a study of all the Waverley novels. Between Scott and Dumas there are resemblances which always strike the attention. Both, as boys, were what is scholasti-

cally called "idle"; both began life as apprentices to the legal profession: each essayed first a form of literature different from that in which he eventually found his widest popularity. Scott began with poetry, Dumas with drama, but the chief title to fame of both was to be the historical romance. In each case German romanticism was a powerful influence, and by a curious coincidence both Scott and Dumas in early years exercised themselves in a translation of the same work—Bürger's ballad *Lenore*. Both, it may be added, made much money by their writings; the one built his Abbotsford, the other his Monte Cristo; and both, though from very different causes, fell into financial difficulties. Were the comparison pursued so as to include the characters of the two men the result would be a contrast rather embarrassing to the biographer of Dumas, however pleasing to the patriotic Briton. Let it be confined, then, to the less invidious sphere of literature. Here the inheritance of Dumas from Scott is plenteous—not merely in method (though a comparison of the leisurely back and forward way which both authors, after first skilfully rousing the reader's interest, allow themselves, will show their method to be identical),[1] not so much in specific and detailed imitation, for Dumas drew much more in this way from other writers, French and German, but in two wider and more important respects. First, there was the general influence of "the Scotch bard" (as they called him) on the conception of history—an influence shared by all the world (Dumas included), equally evident in the case of professional historians like Michelet and Guizot, and in

[1] Discussing the method of Scott, Dumas (*Histoire de Mes Bêtes*, chapter 1) remarks that he is often dull for half a volume or a volume, during which the reader is being forced to know the characters minutely and thoroughly, and so is prepared to welcome more heartily the more interesting parts which follow. This he considers to be good tactics.

semi-historical writers like Hugo and Mérimée. Briefly expressed, it was the recognition of the romantic or poetic element in history—a science which had hitherto to French eyes appeared either as a dry compendium of facts; or as a spicy unofficial anecdotalism; or, finally, as an instrument by which the historian, taking events as his text, might display his own store of rhetoric or erudition. All this was changed by the influence of Scott. "I regard him," said Thierry, "as the greatest master there has ever been in the matter of *historical divination*." It was under this prevailing spell that Dumas himself at one time thought of becoming a romantic historian; from that position, already better filled by some of his contemporaries, he passed by a natural evolution to the more congenial—though probably in his case not very different—part of an historic-romance writer. In this capacity his obligation to Sir Walter is the simple and direct obligation of disciple to master. "I endeavoured to do for the history of France what he had done for that of Scotland," is a loose but comprehensive way of stating this fact. And it is difficult to see how, without the example of the Waverley novels, works like *La Reine Margot*, *La Dame de Monsoreau*, and the *Mousquetaires* series would have come into existence. This being so, Dumas seems to us rather lukewarm in acknowledging his debt. In referring to Scott's death his words are: "This event made a certain impression on me, not that I had the honour of knowing the author of *Waverley* and *Ivanhoe* but his books had a great influence on the outset of my literary life." By "the outset" Dumas means that in the days when he read Scott he had no thoughts of novel-writing but was wholly absorbed in drama; and he found that "the qualities of Scott are not dramatic qualities. Admirable in the portrayal of manners, character

and costume, he is unable to depict passions, and to make dramas you need passions. . . . *Kenilworth* is the only *roman passioné* that he wrote, and it is the only one that has attained great success in stage form. . . . My conviction was that France would be best suited by an equal fidelity in regard to manners and characters, combined with a more lively dialogue and more real passions." Writing nearly twenty years after Sir Walter's death, and at a time when his own greatest novels had been produced, Dumas might without arrogance deliver his opinion. Whatever be thought of it as a criticism—and it certainly might have been supplemented by some reference to the great influence of Scott upon his early dramas [1]—we have here the cardinal difference between the two. Equally free in their treatment of history, equally skilled to weave plots, equally successful (it may be) in adding to the distant past a living interest—the former approached his work as a poet and an antiquarian, the latter as a dramatist—a *metteur en scène*. Scott wooed the Muse of History as a sedate and courteous lover; Dumas chucked her under the chin and took her out for a jaunt. The bent of the one was to picturesque and romantic description, of the other to lively dialogue and sensational situations; the one is more interesting, the other more exciting. At the root of it is the theatrical instinct of the man—that of his race in general and of his own temperament in particular—showing itself in all his writings and in most of his actions. The fact can

[1] Dumas says that he attempted to dramatize two of Scott's novels, in each case without success. But he does not refer to the obvious suggestion of the scenery and surroundings of *Henri III* by *Quentin Durward*, nor to the similarity between the position of Monaldeschi in Christine and that of Leicester in *Kenilworth* drawn two ways between Elizabeth and Amy Robsart. Other instances will be noticed in their place.

hardly be over-stated, and it must be remembered that, though his wider fame is that of a novelist, Dumas himself regarded this as only an offshoot from the dramatic work which was his most properly and distinctively.

Meanwhile, outside of literature, he was enlarging his experience of life in various ways. From a medical-student friend, who used to take him to La Charité, he picked up a knowledge of drugs and of anatomy to which several of his novels—*Amaury*, *Monte Cristo*, *Balsamo*, for example—afterwards testified. Among literary people to whom De Leuven introduced him, the most important was Soulié,[1] a man whose aims and ideas seem to have singularly coincided—or rather clashed—with his own, without however any worse result than a temporary friction soon repaired by mutual goodwill. The friendship of the De Leuvens, and through them of the Arnaults, gave him also a certain amount of social intercourse. But on the whole the beginning of his life in Paris was bound to be lonely and uneventful, except for one event which loneliness may partly account for. That event he describes thus: "On July 29, 1824, while the Duc de Montpensier was coming into the world at the Palais Royal, there was born for me a Duc de Chartres at No. 1, Place des Italiens." The fact is that he had made the acquaintance of a young woman—Marie Catherine Labay—who lodged in the same house as himself. She was a perfectly respectable sempstress, fairly well-to-do, and employing other hands under her. The two young people were naturally flung together, acquaintance developed into friendship, friendship into love, and love into the event

[1] Frédéric Soulié (1800–47) was the author of poems (*Amours Françaises*), dramas (*Christine*, *Clotilde*, *Eulalie Pontois*), novels (*Le Magnetiseur*, *Les deux Cadavres*, *Les Mémoires du Diable*, etc., etc.).

which gave to the world the distinguished author of *La Dame aux Camélias* and *Le Demi-Monde*. There is a levity which rather jars about the tone of Dumas in this announcement: it was, of course, his way of covering an awkward position—the more easy to him as he was never much alive to the awkwardness, nor indeed was he the person most affected by it. At the time of writing he no doubt intended the wording of his sentence as a compliment to the young man of whom he had already good reason to be proud—"my best work"—as he jauntily said on another occasion. It was most unlikely—given Dumas' volatile character and the temptations which success was soon to bring—that he would remain constant to the woman who ought to have been his wife, and for whom his affection was probably quite as sincere as that with which various other ladies inspired him. On the other hand, it would be unfair to describe his conduct as cruel, or even as discreditable. He did not seek to evade his responsibilities, but undertook them with the same jovial heartiness which he put into everything. For a while Père, Mère and Bébé lived under the same roof: when the inevitable separation came, and the mother insisted on her right to keep the child, Dumas took rooms for them, contributed fairly to their maintenance, and paid them frequent visits. Such affairs are bad at the best, but this particular one contains two consoling elements, one of which is the undoubted advantage to the boy's training of being under the sole control of his mother; the other, that we cannot, even in moments of extreme optimism, conceive the existence of any woman who would for long have tolerated Dumas *père* as a husband. In the less difficult filial relation he shone much more, and his devotion to his mother was never denied. One of the first results of this addition to his establishment was to bring his mother to Paris. For

some time he had been urging her to come; and now, having disposed of the tobacco-shop, she arrived bringing her modest household gods and a hundred *louis* in cash. Larger quarters were necessary, and these were found in the Faubourg Saint-Denis, though the change involved a more than doubled rent.

To this time (the beginning of 1825) belongs also an event without which a Parisian could hardly consider himself to have properly begun life. Dumas having discarded his provincial attire, had become something of a dandy; and his appearance attracting one day in a public billiard room some insult real or imagined, he retaliated by a deliberate and silly provocation, walking up to the table and scattering the balls which his adversaries were playing with. Two friends who were with him arranged matters: there was the usual preliminary practice at the shooting gallery, in which Dumas astonished his seconds by the accuracy of his aim: at the same time he professed himself equally expert with the sword should his opponent choose that weapon. The opponent did choose the sword. Time and place were fixed for the next morning, everything went forward in due form, Dumas and his seconds were in good time and also the seconds of his opponent. Unfortunately the gentleman himself did not appear; and after waiting three hours the party went off. An investigation followed, and M. B.—— (the opponent) was found peacefully reposing in his bed, having (he explained) overslept himself. Dumas would have been quite satisfied to leave things thus: not so his seconds, who insisted on another appointment. The meeting therefore was re-arranged for the next morning. It was a bitter wintry day, snow deep on the ground, as they proceeded to a secluded spot in the Montmartre direction. This time Dumas's man did not fail; but it was at once

evident that he was no swordsman, and one slight thrust just touching the shoulder was sufficient to make him recoil so precipitately that catching his foot on a stump he fell flat on his back. "It happened," says Dumas, "that, while taking off my coat and vest, I had stuck my sword in a snow heap, and the frozen point just grazing my adversary's shoulder, had given him the unpleasant shock which accounted for his sudden collapse. The poor fellow, I found, had never held a sword before." Here the affair ended, neither more nor less ludicrous than the majority of its kind; and Dumas could congratulate himself on having fought his first duel. Let it in fairness be added—for he has been often slandered on this score—that there is no trace of vain-gloriousness in his own account. On the contrary, he confesses to many qualms which he explains physiologically as the probable sensations of the average man of sanguine temperament, who is brave on the first instant, cowardly on second thoughts, and finally succeeds—by an effort of the moral over the physical—in bracing himself to meet with coolness the critical moment. "I believe man to be brave when he is awake, a coward when he is *en rêve*, because in the latter case his soul is absent, and the brute part reigns alone. . . . When I am on the ground I am conscious of a *constriction intérieure*, but there is no outward trace of agitation. . . . On another occasion (in 1834) when I had a duel, Bixio—then a medical student—was my second. He felt my pulse at the moment when I held the pistol in my hand; it went only 69 to the minute, that is to say, two more than the normal number of pulsations."

With an increased household, the question of supplementing his small salary by literary work became a pressing one for Dumas. Both he and De Leuven now realized that, to

be successful, they must have the help of some expert in stage requirements. They applied therefore to one Rousseau, a clever manipulator of vaudevilles, and a jovial type of that long since extinct school (immortalized in Murger's *La Vie de Bohême*) which drew inspiration from the wine cup and the punch bowl, the sort of man who might be called an author when he was sober were it not that his best work was apparently done when he was otherwise. A good-natured fellow, of course, and a very convenient hack was Rousseau, of whose bibulous propensions Dumas tells many stories, new and old. On the particular Sunday morning when the two friends called upon Rousseau they found him suffering from the depression naturally following from a night spent in the street under humiliating—not to say ludicrous—circumstances. On the previous evening Rousseau, as often, had supped too well ; and the friend who tried to get him home in the small hours of the morning, finding the task more than usually hopeless, had finally left him to repose on a heap of cabbage leaves and turnip tops outside a greengrocer's shop, having first propped his head against the wall and set beside him a small lamp to guard against casualties. No harm came to Rousseau—on the contrary, when he woke up in daylight he found some coppers in his hand, gifts of the charitable. But the humiliation—for it was in his own neighbourhood—rankled in Rousseau's heart ; he had not yet realized the humorous side of the adventure, nor did, until he had been treated by his two visitors to an excellent *déjeûner* at an adjoining café. Then only was he in a proper mood to consider the two melodramas and the three vaudevilles which De Leuven and Dumas had brought with them. These he promised to read and report upon in the course of a few days, when he was to dine at the De Leuvens. The day came, and with it

Rousseau—lured by the prospect of champagne. His opinion was discouraging: neither melodramas nor vaudevilles displayed anything but the commonplace treatment of hackneyed ideas. "Never mind," whispered Adolphe to Alexandre; "he has not read them"; and this conviction, based upon familiarity with Rousseau's habits, was some consolation. At dessert, Dumas, who was already developing his talents as a *raconteur*, told several anecdotes, among them one connected with his early experiences of sport at Villers-Cotterets. Rousseau's attention was at once arrested. "Fancy," he said, "a man who can tell stories like that fooling away his time in borrowing stale old subjects from other people! Why, that story of yours is just the thing for a vaudeville, and if you want a name call it *La Chasse et l'Amour*." So they drank to the success of the play, and then and there—the table being cleared—set to work upon the plot, after ordering up another bottle of champagne at Rousseau's special request. The scheme of the vaudeville was soon mapped out. Each partner was to write seven of the twenty-one scenes into which it was divided—Dumas' portion being the first seven, and they were to meet again a week hence with their work done. Dumas had done his share by the next evening; De Leuven was hardly less prompt; but Rousseau at the end of the week had not written a line. He explained that he could not work alone, and needed company to stimulate his ideas. And so henceforth the three held sittings every evening till the thing was finished. On Rousseau's suggestion they offered it first to the Gymnase Theatre, where he, as an acted author, could claim a reading before the Committee. Alas! the manager and company of "Scribe's theatre" rejected without hesitation *La Chasse et l'Amour*. "In the evening of this mournful day we three met together again. There

is nothing more melancholy than these gatherings of rejected authors : you are always haunted by a lurking doubt that the Manager's opinion may just possibly be right." However, they could but try elsewhere, at a smaller and less ambitious theatre. The Ambigu seemed as good as another, and here—to cut a long story short—the vaudeville was at once accepted, thereby illustrating, as Dumas in a Pickwickian way observes, " the mutability of human judgments." He informs us also that by his own wish his name did not appear on the playbill (though he had furnished the idea, and written a third of the piece), saying rather grandly : " I did not care to bring my name before the public except in connexion with some important work." This must perhaps be considered as a retrospective view, embodying the sentiments of Dumas at the time when he was writing his Recollections, rather than in the days of *La Chasse et l'Amour*. It is, however, very probable that he was not particularly anxious for his official superiors to learn how their clerk had been disporting himself. Otherwise there was no need to be ashamed of the bright little piece—a vaudeville in the Scribe fashion—dialogue interspersed with songs—describing the mishaps of a worthy retired tradesman, whose ambition is to excel as a sportsman, and who through his awkwardness ends by losing the young lady for whose hand he is the accepted—though not the acceptable —suitor. The character of the short-sighted sportsman with green spectacles, who peppers the gaiters of his future father-in-law, mistaking them for a deer, is too conventional to make its origin a matter of curiosity. Possibly, however, the story to which Dumas refers as having suggested this piece was the same which he tells in another place of M. Arnault, the dramatist. This gentleman, an ardent *chasseur*, but so short-sighted that he could not see two lengths of

his gun in front of him, had come to Villers-Cotterets for a few days' shooting. After waiting some while at his post for the arrival of the deer, he heard a rustling in the thicket and perceived an object. Raising his gun he was about to fire when a woman's voice cried, "Stop, sir, stop! you will kill my cow!" "Are you quite sure that it is your cow and not a deer?" said M. Arnault. "Oh, yes, indeed I am; and I will show you it is so." And the woman, seizing her cow by the tail, pulled it so vigorously that the beast began to bellow. "Thank you," said M. Arnault, "that will do; I admit that I am the one who has made the mistake." If this or some similar anecdote be the one which Dumas told to Rousseau and De Leuven, we can well imagine that they considered it "tall" enough for the purposes of a farce.

The vaudeville then being accepted, the next question was how much it would produce. The scale of payment for such work was, at the Ambigu, twelve francs for each performance, together with six seats considered as equivalent to six francs; so that Dumas' share—a third—of the author's rights, would bring him in six francs a day so long as the piece ran. Being in immediate want of funds, he gladly availed himself, on Rousseau's suggestion, of a plan common at that time among impecunious authors. He sold his seats to a certain speculator in these commodities, Porcher by name, who was able without much risk to comply with Dumas' modest request for fifty francs. The play was produced on September 22, 1825, with such success that the accommodating Porcher, scenting, no doubt, a valuable client, was ready for another deal, advancing this time three hundred francs on the security of future work. With Porcher, who did a large business in this way, Dumas' relations were always most pleasant, and he speaks of him with affectionate

regard as the "benefactor of literature." The sum thus gained, or most of it, was devoted to the publication in one volume of three novelettes which Dumas had written and was determined to publish, believing that they would take Paris by storm. The publishers, however, were not so sanguine, and it was only with difficulty that a small man was found who agreed to produce them, sharing the cost—six hundred francs—with the author. A thousand copies of *Nouvelles Contemporaines* (as the work was called) were printed: four were sold. Thus this book—the first bearing Dumas' name—proved a bad concern for both parties; "after which," says he, "I resolved to have no more of the half-profit system, and I laid to heart the advice given me by one of the publishers I had visited, 'Make yourself a name, young man, and I will publish you.'" The labour, however, was not all wasted, for Dumas—a great economist of good ideas—was able later on to utilize two of these three stories, reconstructing them into *La Rose Rouge* and *Le Cocher de Cabriolet*. Nor were opportunities wanting for making his name in a less costly fashion. The death about this time of his benefactor, General Foy, moved him to write an elegy dedicated to the General's widow as "a homage of respect, gratitude and grief." These verses, published in a collection of similar tributes paid to the popular general, must be regarded rather as the expression of a sincere and creditable feeling than as a mark for literary criticism. They have the crudeness natural to first attempts, and are interesting chiefly as a contrast to the easy and fluent versification which Dumas was able with a little practice to reach. Another set of verses was written to the order of a publisher, as letter-press to a lithograph reproduction of one of the pictures in the Palais Royal, *Le Pâtre romain*; and the opportune appearance at this moment of a monthly periodical called *La Psyche*,

devoted to the encouragement of rising talent, enabled Dumas to publish, without remuneration but also without expense, whatever he liked to write. To this publication he contributed between 1826 and 1829 a sufficient amount of poetry to make a respectable volume,[1] and he continued, from time to time, to express himself in verse with a facility and a feeling which might entitle him to a high position among minor poets had he coveted such a position. But, though he always spoke of himself as a "poet," in the wider sense of a literary creator, Dumas set little store by his occasional verses except as a natural outlet for his emotions. There is a story that, in the days when he was writing and editing *Le Mousquetaire*, he was approached by a young author who brought a copy of verses to submit for the great man's opinion. Dumas having read them with his usual good-nature, and finding them execrable, felt bound to remark: "Mon pauvre ami, vos rimes ne sont pas très riches." Then, touched by the young man's crestfallen look, he hastened to add, by way of consolation, "mais elles sont très *à leur aise*!" And this will serve perhaps as a good enough criticism of Dumas' own poetry—not particularly "rich" (in the technical sense) but quite "easy and free."

These early experiments, therefore, may be regarded chiefly as a step in the process of creating a name: the drama remained the serious purpose—serious but still remote, for

[1] A list of these fugitive pieces (taken from the collection made by M. Charles Glinel in his *Alexandre Dumas et son œuvre*) is given in the Bibliography. Some of them, such as *Le Sylphe*, are met with occasionally in anthologies. The most ambitious, perhaps, is *Leipsick* which contains the germ of the sentiment developed many years later by Victor Hugo in *L'Expiation*. Several of these poems were republished in a periodical called *Les Annales Romantiques* which existed from 1830–36, and to which Dumas contributed during those years.

Dumas was conscious that he had not yet the power to produce the kind of work of which he was vaguely ambitious. Meanwhile the modest profits of *La Chasse et l'Amour* had been so acceptable that he was ready for another undertaking of the same sort. In partnership this time with his friend Lassagne, he found a subject suggested by an incident in the voyages of *Sinbad the Sailor*. A French adventurer comes to an island where it is the law to bury husbands with their wives and *vice versâ*. The "illustrious stranger" (who is in fact only an ex-valet), unaware of this pleasant custom, gets married to the daughter of the Governor, and by a series of diverting events just manages to escape a doom which seemed inevitable. This vaudeville was called *La Noce et l'Enterrement*. Performed first at the Porte Saint-Martin on November 21, 1826, it ran for forty odd nights, and has been revived several times. That he might not be dazzled by too much success, Dumas, sitting among the audience, was privileged to hear the frank criticism of a neighbour who, as the curtain fell, observed, "Well, *that* sort of stuff won't keep the theatre going." The receipts, however, kept Dumas going (so he says) during the winter of 1826–27. It was a critical time, for the Bureau authorities had come to know of his play-writing, and gave him a hint so plain that he judged best to take the bull by the horns. So he went to Oudard, his *chef de bureau*, and asked him what it meant. Oudard, while shifting responsibility on his superior, M. de Broval, explained that literature of the vaudeville type was inconsistent with the duty and dignity of a clerkship in the establishment of the Duc d'Orléans. Dumas agreed that it was poor stuff, but urged the plea of necessity.

"You mean to go on with literature, then?" said Oudard.

"Undoubtedly I do."

"Very well; let me advise you, drop vaudevilles and let your literature be like that of our worthy librarian, Casimir Delavigne: then we shall encourage you instead of blaming you."

This roused Dumas. "Just now," he said, "I cannot, uneducated as I am, do what M. Delavigne does; but let me tell you, M. Oudard, if I did not believe that in the future I should produce work different from his, I would at once meet your wishes and those of M. de Broval; and I would this moment take a solemn oath to abandon literature for ever." It was a bold saying, if uttered at that time (especially as "different from" could only mean "superior to"), and no wonder that "Oudard looked at me with a vacant stare, thunderstruck at my presumption." It was long before Dumas heard the last of this outburst: embellished and exaggerated it formed a nine days' wonder and merriment to his fellow-clerks. For the moment nothing more was said or done, but Dumas perceived that the time might come when he would have to make his choice between literature and the bureau: the choice was already made.

Meanwhile, himself anxious for something of a higher strain than vaudeville, he proposed to Soulié that they should work together on a drama about the Covenanters, to be taken of course from Scott. The idea came to nothing, probably because the collaborators were too like each other for either to supply the other's deficiencies. "Yet I gained," says Dumas, "enormously by this struggle: I felt new forces springing up in me, and like a blind man who is gradually recovering his sight, I was conscious that every day, little by little, my vision was covering a wider horizon." The great enlargement of the horizon—the chief illumination of all—was at hand. This was the

visit to Paris in 1827 of a company of English actors, chief of whom were Miss Smithson, Charles Kemble and Liston. They played at the Odéon and began with *The Rivals:* but it was not till they had come to Shakespeare that their performances attracted all Paris, roused to a white heat of enthusiasm. *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo and Juliet* succeeded each other: every one praised the "adorable" Smithson (some, like Berlioz, raving about her), the "marvellous" Kemble, the "elegant" Abbott. On Dumas himself the effect was prodigious. Like other Parisians, he was impressed most by those elements which seem to us the most familiar and objective—in Hamlet, by the ghost, the play scene and the grave diggers; in *Macbeth*, by the witches; in *Romeo and Juliet*, by the mortuary vaults; all these appealed to his instinctive sense of a strong dramatic situation. But over and above this he admired the naturalness of it all—for the Romanticists (though an effort be needed to remember it) sought "nature" as much as their predecessors and their successors. "From this hour as never before I had an idea what the theatre really was . . . it was the first time that I had seen on the stage real passions animating men and women of flesh and blood." And again "I came to recognize that in the world of the theatre everything emanates from Shakespeare, as in the physical world all radiates from the sun—Shakespeare, to whom none other can be compared, who remains as tragical as Corneille, as comic as Molière, as original as Calderon, as philosophic as Goethe, as impassioned as Schiller. The works of this one man contain as many types as those of all the rest together: he is the one who has created most—next after God."

Without withdrawing one word from this handsome and sweeping laudation, or forgetting how often and how warmly

Dumas in various places speaks to the same effect,[1] it may fairly be supposed—if only from the character of his own dramatic works—that he was attracted in the first instance by the stageable qualities rather than by the philosophy of our great poet. He had already studied—having sufficient English for that purpose—the plays which he now saw performed; but it was Shakespeare on the stage, not Shakespeare in the library that called forth his enthusiasm. Nor is this to be wondered at. The mighty genius which chose a dramatic form for expressing the highest thoughts was bound to appeal—as the greater includes the less—to one whose nature moulded into dramatic shape whatever it apprehended. The best commentary, after all, upon the Shakespearian fervour of Paris at this time is to be found in Dumas' own remark, that the welcome given to English players was due to the immense popularity of the recently produced *Trente Ans, ou la Vie d'un Joueur*, adapted from Werner by two French playwrights. The emotional luxuries afforded by this piece had whetted the public appetite for more: hence the eagerness to witness Kemble's company. It is rather difficult to see how Shakespeare could be regarded as the complement rather than as the corrective of German melodrama, but the fact remains that he was regarded as the provider of much-needed emotions. Why was this? Because, replies Dumas, the quietude or dulness of the Restoration régime, succeeding to the brilliancy of the Empire, required to be relieved by sensations somewhere—if not in life, then on the stage: artificial emotions were to take the place of real ones. And while the public was thus disposed, there was no lack of writers eager to satisfy it. Napoleon, who regarded literature as a use-

[1] His longest disquisition on this subject is the essay "William Shakespere" in the *Souvenirs Dramatiques* (vol. i.).

ful adjunct of sovereignty, had sought to produce poets as mechanically as he produced laws or conscripts. Without success, certainly, in his own time. Yet the Empire, sterile for the moment, was fruitful in a great after-growth of literature—in an age of expansion following on an age of repression. That the romantic impulse was a reactionary effect of the Napoleonic era seems to be Dumas' theory, or the nearest approach he makes to one: and it is a view which has of course been widely elaborated since then. But—to leave the dull business of theorizing for the more cheerful and quite untheoretic personality of Dumas—his own dramatic ideal, formed from the influences already enumerated, would probably on analysis have displayed such component parts as these: naturalness or unconventionality in speech and gesture, an historical interest, a strong element of sensation, and finally the traditional love-motive heightened and intensified into a passion dwarfing all others. On what theme, however, he should experiment, with what powers or with what success, he could not yet know. He had already composed a tragedy on the subject of the Gracchi, and had made a translation of Schiller's *Fiesco*. Neither of these works saw the light, but the latter supplied him with unlimited material for future use. It was a mere chance that guided his footsteps in the right direction when he found himself, at the annual Salon exhibition of pictures and statuary, admiring with many others a bas-relief by a talented lady-artist which represented the murder of Monaldeschi by order of Christina of Sweden. He knew nothing of either personage—the queen or her Italian equerry; but in the course of that evening, which he spent with his friend Soulié, he took the opportunity to look them up in a Dictionary of Biography. The information thus gained gave body to dramatic possibilities

half suggested by the group in the Salon. He confided his idea to Soulié, and proposed that they should write the play together. Soulié rather curtly declined: he did not want to collaborate with any one, and it so happened that he was thinking of doing a tragedy himself on the subject of Christina. "Never mind," he added; "we will work each on his own account, and whichever finishes first will have the best chance of acceptance." He had not the slightest objection to his friend copying out the articles "Christine" and "Monaldeschi" from the Dictionary. "Evidently," says Dumas, "he did not consider me a very formidable rival."

For the making of "Christine" everything ran smoothly. Transferred from the Secretarial to the Archives department, Dumas found himself under a chief whose natural kindliness frustrated his best-meant efforts at severity. This was M. Bichet, "a dear little old man, dressed in the fashion of 1788—satin knee breeches, chiné stockings, black coat and vest of flowered silk, his costume being completed by ruffles and a frill. His hair was snowy white, and ended in a little pigtail: his face was soft and cherubic." M. Bichet, so far from outlawing literature, liked to consider himself its patron in a gentle kind of way; and he encouraged his clerk, when the quantum of office work was duly accomplished, to utilize his leisure moments in writing what Dumas, anxious not to alarm the "classic" predisposition of his chief, was careful to describe as a "tragedy," not as a "drama." Two months had thus quietly passed, and *Christine* was nearing completion, when a disaster befell. The authorities, finding that his present post was practically a sinecure, moved Dumas again—this time into the Bureau of the Forest Service, over which the tremendous Déviolaine presided. This gentleman's opinions on literature—or at least such literature as he deemed his cousin capable of—

have already been recorded. Dumas now found himself in a large room, noisy with many clerks, who, when not occupied, were chattering and reading the papers—an unpleasant contrast to the tranquillity of his late quarters. Trouble soon followed. Anxious to find a quiet corner, the newcomer tried to establish himself in a certain recess screened off by a partition and commonly used for storing the ink bottles. The office boy resented this intrusion, and the amazing "cheek" of Dumas caused a commotion throughout the Bureau only comparable to that of the workhouse authorities on the occasion of Oliver Twist's famous demand. The comparison in this case is not wholly conventional, for Dumas' way of writing—his cumulative method of producing an effective description—reminds us often of the style of Dickens. For example: "My request was greeted with a clamour that spread from the office boy up to the Director-General. The office boy asked the clerks in the large room where he was henceforth to put his empty ink bottles: the clerks in the large room asked the sub-chief whether I considered it beneath me to work with them: the sub-chief asked the chief whether I had come into the Forest Bureau to give orders or to receive them: the chief asked the Director-General whether it was usual for an underling at fifteen hundred francs a year to have a room to himself like a superintendent at four thousand. The Director-General replied that not only was it contrary to administrative usage, but that there was not a single precedent in my favour, and my claim was perfectly monstrous."

So Dumas' little scheme fell through; and the jubilation of the office boy was an added grievance ending in assault and battery, after which the assailant thought prudent to absent himself from the office for three days, and to spend

this time lying in bed and finishing his play. Then a stern summons came from M. Déviolaine; the culprit returned and was reinstated, probably out of consideration for his mother. The chief thing however was that *Christine* was now ready to be placed. Its author aimed high, in designing it for the Théâtre Français. He asked Oudard for an introduction to the Committee, but Oudard declined on the plea that he had no influence. Then Dumas bethought him of the only official connected with the theatre he knew—the prompter—who frequently came into the Palais Royal offices with orders for the play. The prompter explained that the only way of securing an early audience of the Committee was by approaching Baron Taylor, the *commissaire du roi* of the Théâtre Français. For this purpose Dumas drew upon his audacity, and wrote to Nodier as the most likely person he could think of to be useful to him. He reminded Nodier of that memorable night at the play, when they had conversed upon Vampires and Elzevirs, and appealed to his well known kindness for young authors. Nodier, without replying direct, either spoke or wrote to his friend Baron Taylor, from whom Dumas soon heard, naming a day for him to come and read his play. Taylor, being a busy man, apologised for fixing the matutinal hour of 7 a.m., as the only one at his disposal. To the other, time was of no consequence. He sat up all night to make sure of not being late, and arrived punctually with his MS. at the Baron's residence. Even so, he was not to be the first arrival. For as he waited at the door, conscious of this crisis in his life and trembling with anxiety, he heard strange sounds from within—a duologue it seemed, in which the dull monotone of one speaker was broken by loud and angry exclamations of the other. Entering he found the solution of the mystery. Taylor sitting in his bath was

being forced to listen to a tragedy on the classic subject of *Hecuba*, by an author who, often frustrated, had at last timed his intrusion so strategically as to catch the Baron in this helpless position. Dumas was bidden with apologies to wait awhile in the adjoining bedroom, and he got the full benefit of hearing *Hecuba* dragging its slow length along, while Taylor groaned, expostulated, and shivered in the cooling water—a situation which suggested by obvious analogy the fate of Marat. At last it ended, the man departed, and the Baron sought refuge between the sheets. Dumas could not but feel the moment inauspicious, and he timidly offered to come again some other time. "By no means," said Taylor, "now you *are* here, let us have the play." Dumas unfolded his MS. painfully aware that the Commissary viewed its probable length with a suspicious eye. He stumbled somehow through the first Act. "Perhaps my unusual modesty disposed the Baron favourably to me: at any rate he encouraged me. By the end of Act ii he was genuinely interested, and of himself asked for the third." At the conclusion his good opinion was unmistakeable, and he promised to arrange for an early reading before the Committee of the Français.

Such is the wonderful story of Baron Taylor and Dumas' first interview with him—who shall say exactly where the fabric of it ends and the embroidery begins? Yet our scepticism about the *Hecuba* story is somewhat lessened when we remember the proverbial inaccessibility of theatrical managers, and the desperate expedients to which their seclusive habits have ere now compelled many a luckless author. Taylor kept his word to Dumas, who had the honour, within a week's time, of formally reading *Christine* to a special meeting of the Committee summoned for that purpose. It was a great occasion for him to see and to be

seen by all these celebrities of the footlights, Mesdemoiselles Mars, Duchesnois and Levard, Messieurs Samson, Firmin and Michelot. After reading his play Dumas was requested to withdraw while the august body deliberated. Their deliberations would have been interesting to hear: evidently there was a difference of opinion. Once or twice Firmin came out to ask the author this or that question. "Frankly," he explained, "our difficulty is this: we do not know whether the play is classic or romantic." "Never mind about that," said Dumas; "is it a good play or a bad one?" This simple putting of the matter hardly appeared to relieve the troubled minds of the Committee. Eventually they agreed to accept it, subject to the condition that the MS. should be first submitted to the judgment of some expert to be named by them—a limitation which Dumas, in the extreme of his delight, disregarded, but one which soon proved to be more than a mere form. For the Committee referred the piece to M. Picard—well known as a writer of comedies in the days of the Empire: and this cynical old gentleman made his opinion quite clear by sundry marginal comments, queries and triple notes of exclamation, together with a large "impossible" written opposite to the last line, in which the Queen, rejecting the supplications of her faithless lover and the entreaties of the priest, signs for Monaldeschi's death with the words:

Eh bien, j'en ai pitié, mon père. Qu'on l'achève!

There was an interview too. Dumas, accompanied by Firmin, called upon Picard, who with the blandest possible smile observed, "My dear sir, have you any other means of existence?" and when informed of the facts, added, "Well, if I may advise you, go back to your desk, young man, go back to your desk."

This was crushing, and *Christine*—though fortified by the support of Taylor and the good opinion of Nodier—evidently lost favour with the actors owing to the adverse judgment of Picard. When read a second time, it was indeed accepted, but subject again to certain alterations: and Dumas was now to realize what a great gulf there may be between the acceptance of a play and its production. For before these alterations could be agreed upon another *Christine* was offered to the same theatre—the work of a gentleman who was strongly backed by ministerial influence for his own sake, and journalistic influence for the sake of a lady who desired to play the principal part. Moreover the author—a M. Brault—being an elderly man and a hopeless invalid, time was all-important to him. Under these circumstances Dumas could not resist the pressure put upon him to let his own play stand over for the present, on the assurance that it should be produced as soon as possible after the other. A singular arrangement certainly, and one that shows how a theatre like the Français, elevated above mere commercial interests, may yet be actuated by considerations quite other than those of pure art. Dumas yielded to the inevitable with a good grace, although what to his rival was only a question of personal gratification was to him a very urgent matter of bread and cheese; so much so, indeed, that to make a few francs he even resorted at this time to the hack-work of copying out plays for other people. Ultimately, as will be seen, he had no cause to regret an incident which gave him the opportunity of re-writing and re-modelling his original edition of *Christine*—a very mild essay in romanticism—into a strong drama more satisfactory to himself and more accordant with the spirit of the age. For the moment he could do nothing but leave the play where it was, and turn his thoughts elsewhere.

CHAPTER IV

"HENRI III" AND "CHRISTINE"

(1828–1830)

LOOKING backwards Dumas recognized that the postponement of *Christine* was a blessing in disguise. That play in its original shape, "a drama romantic in subject but classic in treatment," would never have marked an epoch or revealed a genius; the one which took its place did both. "Going one day into the Accountant's office to get some paper, of which I had run short, I observed a copy of Anquetil's Chronicle which happened to be lying on a desk. Mechanically my eye fell on the open page, and I read . . ." [here follows an extract relating to Saint-Mégrin one of the favourites of Henri III, the supposed love-affair between him and the Duchesse de Guise, and the grim jest practised on his wife by the Duke when he forced her to drink a potion which he gave her to understand was poison, though she afterwards found it to be nothing worse than soup]. The biography being consulted, referred to the *Mémoires* de l'Estoile, wherein Dumas, borrowing the book from a friend, found the story of how Saint-Mégrin was done to death by Guise's men, and further on how Bussy d'Amboise in another love adventure was trapped into an assignation and murdered. For particulars as to the manners of the period he consulted one or two standard



MEDALLION OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS

AT THE AGE OF 27 YEARS BY DAVID, OF ANGERS

works, and was assisted no doubt by the just published *Scènes Historiques* of Vitet. Here then was the rough equipment of *Henri III et sa Cour*—a suggestive incident or two, the idea of a drama revolving round some well known names, a superficial though not inaccurate view of a certain epoch of history. Before long the plot had shaped itself clearly in Dumas' mind. To fill in this outline he employed a method of reciting the piece bit by bit to himself and friends: in this way it grew to completion, and not till it was complete did he set pen to paper. This ambulant-colloquial method became habitual to him in those of his dramatic works to which he gave most care, and when once the play was thus embedded in his memory the writing of it down was a simple and speedy affair. This way of composition has of course an important bearing on the materials from which *Henri III* was formed. Not for nothing had Dumas been saturating himself for the past five years in the literature of Europe: not for nothing had Nature gifted him with a marvellous faculty of memory and assimilation. In the recitation process it was inevitable that the inventions of others should become blended with his own, just as the bards of ancient Greece or the minstrels of the Middle Ages represented partly themselves and partly the traditions of their elders. No wonder therefore that parts of *Henri III* can be traced to reminiscences of what Dumas had read and knew by heart—to occasional inspirations of Schiller, Scott, and Lope de Vega. This fact, however, detracts nothing from the originality of the plot, the skilful arrangement of incident, and the vigorous movement of the piece—all showing the handiwork of the born dramatist. Dumas' mature judgment of this play cannot be bettered. "A conscientious critic may well find fault with the style, but in the matter of plot he will have nothing to censure. I

have written fifty dramas since then, and not one is better constructed than *Henri III*, which I wrote at the age of twenty-six."

This constructive skill stands out the more clearly by contrast with the unassuming prose in which it is written, and with the inherent thinness of the subject. For *Henri III*, despite its courtly and historical setting, involves no lofty motive, appeals to no generous sentiment, and contains no character (except that of the little page boy) which is not either odious or contemptible. The hero, with whom we ought to sympathize, is a Court gallant who meets his death in intriguing with another man's wife; the heroine is the tenderly hysterical Catherine of Cleves, who when bidden by her husband to make an appointment with her lover resists his threat of poison, but yields under the pressure of his mailed fist. Then there is the King of France, who plays cup and ball with his minions—Henri III, conceived at first by the author as a vicious and irresolute imbecile, but corrected by the actor (after first-night comments) into a truer mixture of cleverness with vice. We have also the diabolical scheming of the Queen-Mother—the traditional Catherine de Medici with her horoscopes and drugs; finally there is the Duc de Guise, painted several shades blacker than history warrants, and represented rather as a brutal and cowardly conspirator than as the ambitious fanatic who led the Catholic League.

It must be said, however, that such criticisms are only second thoughts: they do not occur at a first reading, still less at a first seeing, when the reader or spectator is fairly dazzled by what can only be described in the common phrase as "a rattling good play." *Henri III*, in short, is a masterpiece of treatment: it is excellent with a purely theatrical excellence. Thus it impressed the friends who

heard it at informal readings, thus it impressed the members of the Comédie Française, who fancied better parts for themselves than they had found in *Christine.* Firmin was especially anxious for the *rôle* of Saint-Mégrin ; Mademoiselle Mars saw herself as the Duchess of Guise. Picard's opinion was not asked this time, but Firmin secured the approval of Béranger, whose influence was all-powerful at that time, and Baron Taylor was again a staunch supporter. And so, after some of the usual wranglings about the distribution of parts, *Henri III* was cast and its rehearsals put in hand.

Meanwhile the introduction of Dumas to Béranger was helpful in another way also. The interruptions of office work involved by these preliminaries, the constant dropping in to the Bureau of Firmin, Mademoiselle Mars, or some other theatrical lady or gentleman, brought to a head the dissatisfaction with which the authorities had for some time regarded their dramatic clerk. Summoned to the presence of M. de Broval, Dumas represents himself as forestalling dismissal by a voluntary resignation, much as he had done some years before with the notary of Crépy. At any rate, by his uppish and self-confident tone, he made it impossible for the Director-General to do anything but dispense with his services. "Thus ended," he says grandly, "the long struggle between those two deadly enemies, Literature and Bureaucracy." Throughout he depicts himself as a victim, and with singular simplicity seems to consider it unreasonable that he should have been expected to subordinate his private work to his official duties. For that the severity of his superiors amounted to no more than this, and that no more harshness was employed than was necessary to chasten a rather bumptious young man, is evident both from his own account of the facts and from his reinstatement soon after-

wards in another capacity. But while regarding Dumas' view of his dismissal as superfluously heroic, we cannot but admire the boldness with which he cut away from his Bureaucratic moorings and floated forth, rudderless save for his own talents. He divined no doubt by instinct that his confidence was well placed, and that this was one of the moments in life when it must be a case of *l'audace—toujours l'audace*. He continued to act on the same principle. It was here that Béranger's acquaintance was useful; for the famous *chansonnier* good-naturedly induced his friend Lafitte, the banker, to advance Dumas, without interest and on the security of his play, a sum of £120, which being equivalent to the amount of two years' salary would tide over the present loss of income. Dumas deposited a MS. of *Henri III* with Lafitte, signed a receipt, and walked off with three thousand-franc notes.

Thus the year 1829 began. The forthcoming production at the Français was already the subject of conversation and of newspaper paragraphs, some of these latter being obviously framed with the purpose of influencing the Censorship to prohibit the play. But *Henri III* passed safely through this ordeal, and was returned with only a few unimportant alterations, a result which its author attributed to the liberal views of M. de Martignac. Three days before the date—February 11—fixed for the first performance, an unexpected blow fell upon Dumas. He was at the theatre attending a rehearsal when word was brought him of the sudden and dangerous illness of his mother. She had been calling at the house where the Déviolaines lodged, and was just leaving when she was seized by an apoplectic fit involving paralysis of the left side. She had been carried back into the house, and was there lying unconscious when her son hastened in from the theatre. A doctor was soon in

attendance, and as fortunately there was an unlet room in the house Dumas at once engaged it, and did everything to make the sufferer comfortable. His heart was very heavy, not only because he dearly loved his mother, but because he knew too well that anxiety on his account had been a predisposing cause of the catastrophe. In one of his many true and genuine bursts of feeling, he says, "Ah! think how ready we are, for any light caprice of youth, to leave a mother while she lives, until some day comes the awful and inevitable hour when she has to leave us! Then, when it is too late, we weep and reproach ourselves for all that neglect and indifference which parted us needlessly from the guardian angel now parted from us for ever."

But Dumas was a good son, if a thoughtless one; and at this crisis of his life, divided between the love of the past and the hope of the future, he responded bravely to both, and spent at his mother's bedside every moment that was not absolutely necessary at the theatre. Happily Madame Dumas' state was not desperate, and tended by her two children she gradually rallied, though her condition was still critical on the day of her son's great venture. For that venture Dumas had one card yet to play, that nothing might be left undone. Unsummoned, and therefore contrary to all etiquette, he sought an interview with the Duc d'Orléans on the day before the production of *Henri III.* In the character of one aggrieved at the way in which the Duke had endorsed the harsh action of M. de Broval, he appealed to His Highness to do him the justice of being present at the Théâtre Français on the following evening to see whether he was the worthless idler they made him out to be. The Duke amazed, or amused, at this rare audacity, showed a royal good nature. He deprecated any desire to disparage M. Dumas' perseverance in other than the official sphere,

and said that he would have attended with pleasure but that unfortunately it was impossible.

"Impossible! my lord," said Dumas; "my despair at that word must be my excuse for presuming to ask your Highness whence comes the impossibility."

"The fact is," replied the Duke, "I have a large dinner party at the Palais Royal to-morrow evening—some twenty or thirty Princes and Princesses."

"Might I humbly suggest to your Highness that *Henri III* would not be a bad entertainment to give these exalted personages?"

The Duke pointed out that his dinner began at six, and the theatre at seven. But Dumas was at once ready with a plan—that the Duke should put forward his dinner by an hour, and that the Français should put back the play by the same time: "thus your Highness will have three hours in which to appease the hunger of your Royal guests." The Duke made one last playful effort to baffle his petitioner: "how could his large party be accommodated in the three boxes to which he was entitled?"

"That can easily be arranged, my lord; for I have requested the authorities of the Theatre to reserve the Grand Circle until I had seen you."

The Duke laughed: he was fairly cornered, but he fired one shot before surrendering. "So you calculated, M. Dumas, that I should attend your play?"

Dumas bowed and confessed that he had. So it was settled that if the Français would fix the performance for eight o'clock the Duke would make five his dinner hour, and in that case would desire the Grand Circle to be reserved for himself and party. Of course Baron Taylor was delighted to secure this patronage, and things were so arranged.

The *première* of *Henri III* has been described by many

pens and by all as a memorable scene. The house crowded to its utmost, the boxes filled with celebrities who had in some cases paid fancy prices, the distinguished occupants of the Grand Circle, the blaze of jewellery and orders—as a social function it might have been a State performance at the Opera. As a literary and dramatic contest it was still more remarkable. Dumas had been given a considerable number of tickets for the *parterre*, which he distributed among his friends. The difficulty of getting places had caused Victor Hugo and Alfred de Vigny to apply through a friend to him. In this way he made their acquaintance, and his sister found room for them in her box. There was thus a large friendly element in the audience, though not an organized *claque*; at the same time the opponents of the new ideas—the Conservatives of literature—were well represented. It was not of course a deliberate and prepared battlefield like the performance of *Hernani* a year later, when the issues were plainer and the combatants more alert; nor was the name of Dumas celebrated before *Henri III*, as Victor Hugo's was (by his *Odes et Ballades* and the preface of *Cromwell*) before *Hernani*. This occasion was rather a preliminary skirmish, in which each side learnt the dispositions of the adversary. The friendly and hostile factions formed, after all, only a small part of the spectators: the great majority, indifferent to the literary question, came prepared to applaud or hiss according as the play entertained them or not. They were tired of the long succession of mediocre tragedies on mighty themes, of the Frenchified Romans in laticlave, cothurnus, and helmet, tolerated so long as Talma lived but since his death more and more wearisome: they were tired of this, and if they did not know exactly what they wanted they knew very well what they did not want. And while such were the

feelings of the audience, the players themselves had every reason to bid their utmost for success. For some little while the receipts of the Français had been growing less; and though to a subsidized theatre this was of less consequence than to an ordinary one, yet thin houses suited neither the ambition of the *sociétaires* nor their pockets. Amid the ardour of the Romantic controversy it is well to remember this point, however humble or sordid, that Dumas did a practical and tangible service to the national theatre by reviving an interest, already languishing, in that venerable institution. Finally, there was the author himself, Alexandre Dumas—aged twenty-six, ex-clerk in the household of the Duc d'Orléans—who, after spending the day beside his sick mother, hurried to the theatre at 7.45 and took his seat alone and unobserved in a small stage-box, to wait for the curtain which should rise on his play and on his future.

He had produced a work important even more from its place and occasion than from its own nature. The wave of romantic feeling had already advanced unresisted in other parts of literature—in Poetry and in History: in the Drama it had penetrated to the outer strand and was manifest in the sensational pieces of the popular theatres. Even at the Français, elevated high and dry in tradition and antiquity, some first signs of its influx had appeared. There had been the *Jane Shore* of Lemercier, the *Louis XI* of Mély-Janin, and *Le Cid d'Andalousie* of Lebrun—timid and tentative efforts, none of them original and none successful. *Henri III* now came in the fulness of time—a drama, not a tragedy, a drama modern in its treatment and French in its subject, a drama of passion and sensation even more than of history: for it might be most truly called "The Loves of the Duchesse de Guise and the Comte Saint-Mégrin," in which love, the unity of the subject lies. As for the other unities, they are

respected within the limits of every good play. The time of the action is not unduly extended, and the scene is only changed with each act. The chief innovation no doubt was the prominence given to *couleur-locale*—in the shape of costumes and scenery, in the arrangement of which several of the eminent painters of the day had co-operated—together with a liberal use of the language and exclamations of Henri III's time provided by the author from contemporary records. On the whole a wonderful mixture of dignity and impudence—impudent enough in some of the words and incidents for a Boulevard theatre, too dignified in setting for any but one of the two national houses, the Français or the Odéon. Such was the play performed on February 11, 1829.

"Never shall I forget," says Dumas with a true touch of realism, "the cold breath of fresh air from the stage that came on my heated brow as the curtain rose." Neither author nor actors could foresee the reception of the play, but both knew well that there were certain critical positions on which its fate would hang. The first act, for example, including the business with the astrologer, was feared as tedious; but the spectators took it well, and their excitement was kindled by an effective "curtain," when the Duke, hinting his purpose, says to one of his followers, "Find me the men who got rid of Dugast." Act ii, again, might have offended by the frivolous presentation of a King of France surrounded by his minions playing with cup and ball and pea-shooters; happily it amused. The third act was the crucial test: would the audience tolerate a scene so violent, so brutal, as that "mailed fist" episode between the Duke and Duchess which Dumas had adapted from the incident of Lord Lindesay and Mary Queen of Scots in *The Abbot*. Yes: there were "cries of horror," but "thunders of applause." Practically this secured the success of the play, which hence

onward was a growing triumph, till it culminated in the sensational death scene of Saint-Mégrin, the handkerchief episode, and the ominous words of the Duke (referring to the King), "Now that we have done with the valet, we will see to the master."

Amid the applause which followed the fall of the curtain Firmin (who had played Saint-Mégrin) stepped forward and gave out the author's name, whereupon the spectators —Duke and all—rose up to mark their respect. And after the audience had dispersed Dumas lingered in the house receiving the congratulations of actors and friends, whose young exuberance of delight gave colour to exaggerated and malicious tales about an insulted Corneille and a derided Racine. When Dumas reached home he found his mother sleeping quietly. Three times in the course of the performance he had rushed from the theatre to see how she was doing, and the joy of his success would have been unspeakably greater could she have understood and shared it. Even as it was that success might well have intoxicated a more sober brain. Unknown before this day, the name of Alexandre Dumas was now on every one's lips. Hence a multitude of floral tributes and complimentary letters, first among the latter being a cordial note from his late chief, M. de Broval, which Dumas rather perversely quotes as a discreditable change of front on the part of the man who had dismissed him a few months before; whereas, fairly estimated and considered in conjunction with the Duke's own kindness, it bears out what was said above on the question of bureaucracy *versus* literature. Then there were the press notices, critical on obvious points of criticism, but for the most part very flattering to the author's talent; finally, there was the solid satisfaction of cash—a prospective income on the performances of the play, and an immediate

sum of £240 offered and accepted for the copyright. Dumas could not resist the temptation of showing his earnings to M. Déviolaine. That gentleman had of course been present in the theatre, growling in his usual fashion, but at heart immensely delighted by the "young rascal's" success. When Dumas displayed his six thousand-franc notes in one hand and the letter from the Director-General in the other, M. Déviolaine could only throw up his hands and exclaim, "Well, I am ——!" And well he might be. For Dumas had falsified all expectations save his own. "My success," he says, "if not the best deserved, was at any rate one of the most sensational of the time."

A further gratification was to follow when the Duchesse d'Orléans graciously sent for him and made inquiries for his mother's health, while the Duke, expressing a desire to retain him in his service, gave him the pleasant and almost sinecure office of assistant-librarian at the Palais Royal at a salary of twelve hundred francs. Dumas thinks necessary to explain his acceptance of this post by observing that the Duke represented, in Charles X's reign, just that moderate shade of Republicanism with which he (Dumas) sympathized. This explanation, suggested no doubt by later charges of ingratitude to his patron, seems otherwise slightly ludicrous, considering the relative positions of the two men: and we can imagine the Ducal smile when, in accepting his new position, the author of *Henri III* was careful to remark that "the question of money was no longer one of any importance." Dumas, we can well believe, said this in all sincerity: he was now in his own esteem as rich as Croesus. But the six thousand francs soon went. Half of it was at once employed in repaying the banker; another portion, not specified but probably not much less than a thousand francs, was refunded to Porcher for sundry "ad-

vances" ; and then having realized for once the insecurity of existence Dumas compounded with a *restaurateur* for a year's luncheons and dinners in consideration of eighteen hundred francs paid in advance. Alas ! this early and perhaps solitary instance of provident economy was unrewarded: a month later the café in question failed and closed its doors.

In other ways Dumas now began to launch out. He moved his mother and family into more agreeable rooms ; for himself he took an apartment in the Rue de l'Université, and furnished it with some elegance that he might be able to receive his friends of the theatrical profession. It was now too that his appearance first became familiar to the public at large. He has related how on the morning after *Henri III* he was seized upon by the editor of an illustrated paper and carried off to the studio of Achille Dévéria, who then and there made a lithograph of him for *L'Artiste*. This was followed at intervals by various portraits, sketches, and caricatures.

Such were the pleasures of fame : vexations were not wanting. At the outset *Henri III* narrowly escaped prohibition on the day after its first performance, for Act ii, the "amusing part" as it seemed to the audience, was not so amusing to the authorities, who saw in it a touch of disrespect to monarchy. Dumas was able, however, to meet M. de Martignac's moderate requirements by a few alterations, chiefly effected in Michelot's rendering of the part of King Henry. Another inevitable result of success was to create, along with new friends, new enemies, jealous belittlers of a lightly-won triumph. A less sensitive person than Dumas might legitimately have been annoyed to read paragraphs hinting—and in one case openly asserting—that the author of *Henri III* owed both the acceptance of his

play by the Français and its carefully elaborate production to the influence and favour of the Duc d'Orléans, in whose employment he was. Considering the real relations of Dumas to the officials of the Palais Royal, and that he had brought out his play not by their help but in spite of them, this statement, which derived a surface plausibility from the Duke's presence at the first performance, might indeed seem one of those lies which, being half the truth, are ever the basest. Whether it was worth noticing is another question. Dumas at any rate blazed up and sought reparation from the paragraphist, but found that this gentleman —through another "affair" of the previous day in which he had lost a couple of fingers—was unable to oblige. For this he was most apologetic and altogether so courteous that the aggrieved person parted from him on the most cordial terms, fully convinced that he was not the author of the offensive paragraph but had made himself responsible to shield some one else. Dumas, like his father, was as quick to lay aside wrath as to gather it.

Another small unpleasantness arose from his new position in the Library of the Palais Royal when he found himself the assistant of Casimir Delavigne. This author, whose popularity had somewhat waned since the days of *Les Messéniennes*, was now seeking to find a middle way between the old school and the new, by preserving the "classic" conventions in form and language, while drawing his subjects from the materials of the "Romantics." Just now he had finished a verse melodrama on the Byronic theme of *Marino Falicro*, which he designed for the Théâtre Français. But the success of *Henri III*, performed some forty times in three months, prejudiced the chances of a milder play, and made the authorities unwilling to stage Marino Faliero till the following year. Vexed at this delay, and failing by

his attitude of compromise to secure the votes of either the progressive or the reactionary members of the Comédie, Delavigne withdrew his play from that theatre and brought it out at the Porte Saint-Martin, where it went only moderately well. The result was to cause a certain antagonism between Delavigne and Dumas—between the established dramatist of middle age and the young adventurer who seemed to encroach upon his reputation. This petty and personal matter was soon merged in the wider literary quarrel which also arose from Dumas' much-talked-of drama. It was *Henri III*, or rather the anticipations of it supplied by rumour, that prompted the well known petition drawn up and presented to the King in January of this year by seven of the principal dramatists of the "Classic" school. Herein these gentlemen expressed their deep concern and regret that the management of the national theatre should allow melodrama to take the place of tragedy, and the stage of Corneille and Racine and Voltaire to be threatened with destruction. The petition was a protest primarily against Baron Taylor and that section of the *sociétaires* which favoured new things, secondly against the dramatic principles enunciated in the preface of *Cromwell*, and lastly against *Henri III* and its author. It mentioned no names, but was full of bitter phrases, such as "the Melpomene of the Boulevards," "hybrid imitations of foreign literature," "spectacular effect as a substitute for appeals to the heart or the intellect," and so forth. Much of the criticism in this document was, no doubt, true and to the point. Unfortunately its signatories—with one exception all dramatists—were interested parties: the chief defect of the manifesto lay in the fact that it was a manifesto. There was certainly a sublime simplicity in the assumed defence of Corneille and Racine, and the implication that they (the signatories) were the

legatees in talent and merit of those masters. Above all, the petition alienated public sympathy by the dogmatism of its tone, and the apparent claim of a right to dictate what popular taste should be. Thus the ultimate question involved, whether the Théâtre Français by the conditions of its foundation ought to be restricted to a certain class of play or whether it might adapt itself to the changing tastes of different periods—a question by no means arguable on one side only—was obscured and forgotten in the ridicule which the petitioners drew upon themselves. Charles X's reply that he in a matter of this sort had nothing to say, having only like other Frenchmen his seat in the *parterre*, was deemed a good and sufficient saying—even witty, as Dumas says, "With a *spirituel* Minister (i.e. M. de Martignac) every one is *spirituel*—even the King." It was certainly a politic answer, for, while extinguishing the one party, it deprived the other of whatever advantage they might have gained and no doubt would have welcomed from martyrdom—a loss, however, which was soon made up to them by the severity of the Censorship towards the plays of Hugo and Dumas.

Delavigne was not among the signatories of this petition —indeed he could hardly have been in accord with its spirit; but another dramatist, hitherto a friend of Dumas, headed the list. This was M. Arnault, at whose house and table Dumas had been a frequent visitor, but from whom he now received (*heu! genus irritabile!*) a very plain hint that his room would henceforth be more esteemed than his company. The loss of one friend, however, was outbalanced by the accession of many others. The author of *Henri III* became naturally a member of the triumvirate, of which the other two members were Hugo and De Vigny. Dumas was proud to belong to these men, whose qualities he eulogizes in

many pages. That saying of his (in the preface to his *Causeries*) is well known: "Lamartine is a dreamer, Hugo is a thinker, and I am a vulgarizer" (*rêveur—penseur—vulgarisateur*). For himself he was no *doctrinaire*—no devotee of literary views. In writing *Henri III* he had expressed his own temperament, little influenced by the theories either of the Cénacle or of the preface to *Cromwell*. Nevertheless here he was with Hugo and De Vigny—indeed before either of them, as the protagonist in that noisy fight for the theatre which, though only the last phase of a movement otherwise unobtrusive, has attracted by its publicity a perhaps inordinate share of attention.

But Dumas had now to consider his *Christine*, which he intended to revise and re-shape. For this purpose he imagined that a journey and a change of scene would be useful. So he took the first coach starting for Havre, and getting the interior to himself found in this strange locality the necessary inspiration. Before reaching Havre—a journey then of some twenty hours from Paris—he had mapped out the new *Christine*, with its prologue and epilogue, its triple division of place, "Stockholm, Fontainebleau, and Rome," and the additional character of Paula—the most attractive in the play as it now stands—the girl-lover of Monaldeschi, who follows him disguised as a page in attendance on the Queen, and is at last basely sacrificed by the favourite, who has loved both women and been false to each. *Christine* is not a play that has commended itself much to critics. Its conception—the crossing of love and political ambition—is strong enough, but the execution, usually Dumas' best point, is somewhat languid. Nor does either the insolent harshness of Christine or the abject cowardice of Monaldeschi appeal to that interest which main characters should arouse. There are of course some fine

lines—this being one of Dumas' few verse plays—and several strong situations, such as the scene in Act iv between Monaldeschi and Sentinelli, and the death of Paula in Act v. The monologues of Sentinelli were more admired at first as a poetic effort than when it was discovered that they were little more than translations from the *Egmont* of Goethe, in whom, as in Schiller, Dumas had steeped himself.

The re-cast play was now, however, finished and ready to take the place of that first version which (as previously mentioned) had been shelved for another author's *Christine*. The latter had not been successful, and as the Français showed no very great alacrity for another similar venture, Dumas, somewhat vexed and impatient of delay, withdrew his piece from that theatre and looked about for another house which would produce it at once. Unfortunately there was a glut of *Christines* in the market just now. For the Odéon had also put on a play of this name—the work of Dumas' friend Soulié, who had carried out his idea, as he had promised, independently. Soulié's drama had failed to draw, and it seemed more than likely that, however interesting the personality of the Queen of Sweden, Parisian playgoers might have had enough of her. From this difficulty a way out was found by a strange caprice of Harel, the manager of the Odéon. Harel had gone to considerable expense in mounting Soulié's play, which he had now to withdraw: costumes, scenery, and actors were all at hand. Moreover Harel had, since the success of *Henri III*, formed a high opinion of Dumas. Why not then, it occurred to him, utilize Dumas' play for his own theatre? Why not give his patrons the novelty of one *Christine* succeeding another? He laid this proposal before Dumas, who at once forwarded his letter to Soulié, with this little note of his own:—

"My dear Frederic,—Read the enclosed. Your friend Harel is a fine robber!"

The reply came back, prompt and laconic:—

"My dear Dumas,—Harel is not my friend; he is a theatrical manager. Harel is not a robber; he is a man of business. I should not myself act as he is doing, but I should advise him so to act. Pick up the bits of my *Christine* (there are plenty of them), fling them into the first dust-cart that comes along, and get your own play produced. Yours ever, F. Soulié."

Thereupon Dumas read his drama to the Odéon company, and the parts were at once distributed, the four principal *rôles* being assigned to Mademoiselle Georges (Christine), Mademoiselle Noblet (Paula), Ligier (Sentinelli), and Lockroy (Monaldeschi). Among those present at the reading were Sainte-Beuve and Jules Janin; and whether it was on the suggestion of one of them or not, Harel, who was nothing if not commercial, came to Dumas next morning and, professing himself delighted with the play and sanguine of its success, suggested by way of making a good thing better that it should be turned into prose before the rehearsals began! "Needless to say," observed Dumas, "I laughed in his face and showed him the door." There the matter ended; rehearsals began, and six weeks later *Christine* was produced. This time there was a stronger opposition than had been the case with *Henri III.* *Othello* and *Hernani* had both appeared since then, and the opponents of romantic drama were no longer to be caught napping. Foreknowledge of their intentions gave rise to a pleasing instance of the brotherly spirit in literature rising superior to petty rivalry. For Soulié with a creditable generosity brought to the help

of his friend a small army of workmen (employed by him at a saw-mill of which he was the owner), whose vigorous applause was a counterblast sufficient to neutralize the *claqueurs* of the opposite faction. These conditions, peculiar to the heated atmosphere of the period, while they ensured a lively scene, made it impossible to judge the fate of a play from a first night. Neither Dumas nor his friends knew at the end of the evening whether *Christine* was a success or a failure. The representation had, however, revealed some weak points; and when after the play Dumas entertained at supper a large party of friends, two of these, Hugo and De Vigny, with the same good fellowship as had animated Soulié, set themselves to make the necessary cuts and improvements, chief of which was the suppression of the epilogue. Retiring to a side room while the merry supper party was going on, these two worked away steadily for four hours, and then, when the revellers had gone and Dumas was asleep, they quietly departed, leaving the corrected MS. on his mantelpiece ready to be forwarded to the theatre next morning. That same day Dumas sold the copyright of *Christine* for 12,000 francs, exactly double of what he had received for *Henri III*.

As a recognition of these successes the Duc d'Orléans—whether of his own kindness or urged by his son, the Duc de Chartres (with whom Dumas, meeting him constantly in the Library of the Palais Royal, had formed a close friendship)—recommended the author of *Henri III* and *Christine* as a suitable recipient for the Cross of the Legion of Honour. The decoration was not, however, granted at this time, perhaps because the growing tendency to identify the Duke with the popular and reforming party prevented him and his *protégés* from being regarded with favour by the Court circle, which indeed was hardly likely to have been much

pleased with *Henri III.* But Dumas was consoled by an invitation—also procured for him by the Duc de Chartres—to the great ball given by the Duc d'Orléans in honour of his brother-in-law Francis, King of Naples and Sicily; at which ball Charles X was present, and every one else of consequence. This festivity, held on May 31, has a political interest from its proximity to the July Revolution, symptoms of which were already perceptible to sagacious minds. M. de Salvandy, for example, indicated the crisis by one of those happy *mots* which secure to their authors a lasting reputation for wit and wisdom. "Monseigneur," he said to the Duc d'Orléans, réferring to the Royal guests, "this is indeed a Neapolitan fête; we are dancing on a volcano." Privately to Dumas, the evening was marked by an episode which can only be worthy of record on the principle that life is made up of trifles. Before the arrival of Charles X the Duke, calling him aside, said, "By the way, in case the King should happen to speak to you, please remember that in addressing him you should not use the words 'Sire' or 'Majesté,' but simply 'Le Roi.'" This hint, kindly meant no doubt, if somewhat clumsily conveyed, implied a slur on Dumas' knowledge of etiquette which he deeply resented; and it was the first of those small wounds to his self-esteem which, being multiplied, contributed consciously or unconsciously to bring about the usually rather ungracious tone of his references to Louis Philippe. If we notice Dumas' presence at this function—the King as it happened did *not*—it is chiefly to mark the enlargement of his circle and the beginning of that process which transformed the obscure clerk into the best known and most talked of man in Paris.

His success as a dramatist had opened many doors to him, principally in literary and theatrical society. There was, for example, the Villenave family, with the younger mem-

bers of which he became intimate. For M. Villenave—a learned man, who held in his house a kind of literary salon every week—Dumas entertained a distant respect, regarding him as a type of the autocratic host who required all his visitors to conform to his own views and to shape their conversation as he led it. But what was this to such congenial details as the fact that M. Villenave was a tall and handsome old man, whose one weakness appeared to be a coquettish love of the white locks which adorned his forehead and were cultivated by a regular process of curling; insomuch that the happiest part of his day was the quarter of an hour during which his head underwent the gentle scratching of the comb, preparatory to being put in papers?

Another house was that of Nodier, preferred to M. Villenave's because Nodier was the ideal host, inspiring conversation in others though himself the essence of wit and paradox. Here at "the Arsenal," over the library of which Nodier was custodian, Dumas passed many happy evenings, sure of meeting some or other of the men whose friendship he enjoyed in varying degrees—Lamartine, Hugo, De Vigny, Béranger, De Musset, Sainte-Beuve, Alphonse Karr, Théophile Gautier, Nestor Roqueplan, and others well known then, less remembered now. Between all these was the common bond of sympathy in literature, and more or less in politics. But Nodier's *salon* was catholic enough to include many who did not share the views of the new school, and were therefore regarded by the young Romanticists with a kind of amused pity as quaint relics of the past. About all whom he saw or heard of Dumas abounds in anecdotes, but whenever the subject happens to be one of these hapless Classicist survivors he takes good care—like Dr. Johnson and the Whigs—that "the Classicist dog shall not get the best of the story." Consider, for instance, the case of poor

M. Parseval de Grandmaison, an amiable gentleman if ever one was, an Academician, and yet disposed to tolerate a certain freedom of language and ideas in the new drama. Now it happened that M. de Grandmaison was present at the first night of *Hernani*; and at the point in the play where Hernani, learning from Ruy Gomez that the latter has entrusted his daughter to the care of Charles V, exclaims, "Vieillard stupide, il l'aime!" M. de Grandmaison, who was somewhat hard of hearing, took the words to be "vieil as de pique!" This was too much for him, and turning to his neighbour he said, "Really, you know, that is rather strong. That a young fellow like Hernani should address a venerable person like Ruy Gomez as 'Old ace of spades'—no, really, I must protest against that!" His neighbour had in fact not caught the words, but being of an argumentative turn he warmly defended them on the ground that "cards had been invented at that time." "What could you say," adds Dumas, "to people who attacked and defended in that fashion?"

Then again there was M. Briffaut, with whom as one of the censors Dumas had some dealings in regard to *Christine*. M. Briffaut's celebrity dated from 1810, when after many years of labour he had completed a drama called *Pelage*, the scene of which was laid in Spain. The Censorship refused to license this play, and an appeal was made to the Emperor. But Napoleon, finding that it contained several lines in praise of the Spaniards—with whom he was then of course at war—was deaf to all entreaties from the author's friends who represented the bitterness of his disappointment. "Very well," said the Emperor at last, "there is a simple way of getting over the difficulty. Let him change the scene of his drama, say to Assyria instead of Spain, and let him give his hero a different name: I should make no

objection then." M. Briffaut jumped at the idea, promptly called his play *Ninus II*, and went through it carefully, striking out the word "Spaniards" wherever it occurred and substituting "Assyrians," altering "Burgos" into "Babylon," and so on. How the metre fared in this process we know not, but the object in view was gained and the play was produced. After this heroic *tour de force* who can doubt that M. Briffaut deserved his place in the Academy? But it may well be conceived that he was hardly the person to be lenient to certain passages in *Christine* on the author's pleading that they were *historically accurate.*

One other of the old Classicists whom Dumas met at Nodier's was M. Viennet, not a dramatist but a peer of France and writer of some distinction for his Fables and Epigrams. He is represented as a pompous and self-satisfied person, whose chief ambition was to rival Voltaire in the domain of Epic poetry, to which end he wrote *La Franciade.* One evening he came into Nodier's with a smile of complacency.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "I have just finished an epic poem of thirty thousand lines. What do you say to that?"

"Say?" replied one of the company, "I should say it would require fifteen thousand men to read it!" This same unfortunate work came in for a good deal of satire. Calling on Béranger, who was at the time undergoing an imprisonment for some of his odes, M. Viennet facetiously observed, "Well, my dear *chansonnier*, how many ballads have you composed since you have been in durance vile?"

"Not one," replied Béranger: "do you think that a ballad is turned off as easily as an epic poem?"

Poor M. Viennet! No wonder that he is described by all authorities as one of the most bitter opponents of the new school.

Some men of the past generation Dumas occasionally came across who were interesting for other than literary reasons. Gohier, for example, once the head of the Directoire Cabinet, seemed a type of the commonplace person pitchforked by chance into a position the importance of which he himself never realized. After all that had passed since Brumaire the 18th, Gohier's view of that crisis was still limited to a sense of personal grievance against Bonaparte for having made a fool of him.

Larrey, once the Surgeon-in-chief of Napoleon's armies, and signalized by the Emperor as "the most honest man he had ever known," was a personage whose large experience of life and death made him most interesting to the young Dumas, whose father also he remembered in Egypt.

And then there was the famous "Citizen-general" Barras, the man who had given Bonaparte his first chance, in sending for him to disperse the rebel sections on the steps of Saint Roch by that historic "whiff of grape-shot" which Carlyle commemorates. Barras, who had laid unwittingly the foundation stone of military despotism, was now in his old age a type of the purely cynical Republican. Without believing in the value or permanence of anything, he acquiesced perforce in the present order of things, and watched with a malicious pleasure the mistakes of the Bourbons while he speculated how long that family would last. Retaining only the negative and destructive elements of the Revolution spirit, he busied himself on his deathbed with an elaborate joke designed to irritate and befool the King's Government. Knowing that their curiosity would impel them, immediately upon his death, to search his house for any papers they might lay hold of, he was careful to put out of the way all such documents as were of political importance. At the same time he caused an imposing array of some thirty

despatch boxes to be set out, all duly locked and sealed, the possession of which he anticipated that the Government would dispute with his heirs. Legal proceedings would follow, lasting six months or a year perhaps, and the Government would of course ultimately win their case. Then in solemn council the precious despatch boxes would be opened and their contents revealed—the laundry bills of Citizen-general Barras carefully preserved for the last thirty-six years! In picturing to himself the disgust of expectant Ministers the old man chuckled so long and so heartily that he died, probably from excess of merriment. Could a better illustration be found than this story of that criticism which justly describes Dumas as a realist in the completest sense of the word—a man who, however much his imagination interfering with accuracy of detail vitiates one requisite part of the historic faculty, is yet always true to human nature, grasps always and portrays character in its absolute and essential types. For no one with any knowledge of the psychology of the Revolution will fail to recognize that this Barras anecdote—be it true or not—embodies perfectly one curious product of that age—an attitude, partly of stoic unconcern, partly of unseemly swagger, which (as other authentic examples attest) so many children of the Revolution delighted to display in the presence of death.

But no society into which he was thrown interested Dumas so much as that of theatrical people. For that strange " profession " of men and women whose business it is to amuse the world by pretending to be what they are not, whose fate it often is to appear, when reduced to reality, as though they had left their proper selves scattered in minute shreds among the various characters they have personated—for this imitative race Dumas had an appreciation and a sympathy to which perhaps no other literary man of his importance has

attained, though Sheridan in this and other respects naturally occurs as a parallel. The sentiment of course does not exhibit itself in any blindness to faults and infirmities of "the profession," but rather in a sincere and manifest belief that everything connected with it—whether in public or private life—must be of universal interest. The fascination of the stage, usually a symptom of tender years and imperfect experience, never departed from Dumas, in spite of occasional protestations to that effect. Whether for him this was a good or bad thing we need not at present inquire; but for the people whose words and deeds he chronicled the advantage was considerable. On no other subject does he exercise more pleasantly his supreme talent for converting very small beer into bright and sparkling champagne of his own especial brand: he has glorified green-room gossip till almost he persuades us that these *artistes* were as interesting as he found them.

For Talma, the tragedian of the Revolution and the Empire, his early admiration never failed; to Talma he always refers, justly no doubt, as the greatest of all actors he had known—one whose art was his sole preoccupation, so much so that to Dumas visiting him shortly before his death he pointed out with satisfaction his sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, saying how admirably they would serve him for the part of Tiberius, which he hoped soon to play. The artistic temperament could no further go; and Dumas performed a labour of love when after the actor's death he collected his memoirs and published them, with a preface by himself,[1] liable in this to no charge of egotism, since Talma did not live to create any characters of the Romantic drama. The mantle of this great player was too large for any single one of his successors, though many were anxious to wear it.

[1] *Mémoires de Talma, recueillis par Alexandre Dumas.*

One of these, Lafon by name, could never acquiesce in the unique popularity of his brother tragedian. Convinced of his own merits he used constantly in Talma's lifetime to refer to him as "l'autre," he himself of course being "l'un" —a habit which once brought upon him the severe rebuke of an exalted personage, who said, "Really, M. Lafon, I think that you are far too often "the one," and far too seldom "the other." This Lafon was a Gascon, and though his *gasconnades* were sometimes those of a fool, he could on occasion make a shrewd hit. At the Théâtre Français he was regarded as the particular exponent of the *chevalier français* part—of those characters, that is, who intervene to save the oppressed, to punish the oppressor, and generally to represent courage and magnanimity. His mannerisms, while they attracted a certain following among the public, naturally offered a mark for the jests of his colleagues. One day a younger member of the company—an excellent mimic —was amusing the other players during an idle interval by taking off the voice and style in which Lafon delivered a certain speech. Every one was convulsed with laughter, when suddenly the subject of the imitation walked in. The position was too palpable for disguise; but Lafon, without displaying any irritation, simply observed that great models were good to follow, and then begged the mimic to repeat the performance exactly for his benefit. The offender was constrained to do so, and the laugh was turned against him when at the end Lafon, complimenting him on his perfection, added, "Now, why don't you play like that on your own account? Then you wouldn't be hissed!"

Dumas' acquaintance with the *chevalier français* arose in connexion with *Christine*. Lafon was not a member of the committee who heard that play read, nor had he received any part in it, there being none suitable for his peculiar gifts.

Hearing of this singular omission of the author, he called confidentially upon Dumas at the Bureau to ask him whether his drama did not contain some *gaillard bien campé* ("a well set-up sort of fellow"), who sternly forbids the Queen to put to death her Minister. Dumas regretted that there was no such character, and Lafon went away disappointed. Soon, however, he returned again. "Could not such a personage be inserted? Surely then the play would be improved." The author could only explain that the scheme of his plot did not admit of any such chivalrous character; and eventually Lafon retired, evidently considering that *Christine* was sorely handicapped by the absence of any *gaillard bien campé*.

But the actor with whom Dumas had most to do at the opening of his dramatic career was Firmin. It was Firmin who had pushed *Christine* and *Henri III*, sustaining the principal part in the latter, as he would also have done in the other had it been performed at the Français; and it was Firmin who introduced Dumas to the profession generally. Privately, he was a man of means who entertained liberally; professionally, he was what is called a "sound" actor. His shortness of stature prevented him from essaying what he chiefly desired, the *rôle* of Bayard; and the traditional conception of this hero as a tall man was a perpetual grievance to Firmin, who lost no opportunity of arguing his own view—that Bayard ought not to be imagined as a Colossus, "no, Bayard was a man of—well, in fact, of my height."[1]

After these, as Dumas' dealings extended to other theatres,

[1] Dumas' references to the stage are widely scattered throughout his works: but the most complete account of his dealings with the Français is contained in his *Souvenirs Dramatiques*, chap. viii., entitled "Mon Odysée à la Comédie Française."

came Lockroy, Ligier, Bocage, Laferrière, Lemaître, Mélingue. In Lemaître—the famous "Frédérick"—he admired the genius of the actor while finding the man "cold, unsociable, and full of cranks"; of Bocage, the impersonator of his beloved "Antony," he speaks with the affection of a warm personal friend; with Mélingue (whose early life Dumas has written in *Une Vie d'Artiste*) his friendship was of later date, this actor being the exponent of D'Artagnan and Edmond Dantès.

Nor were his relations less close with the ladies of the theatre, and it would be difficult sometimes to say how far his interest in these fair *artistes* was personal or merely professional, did not Dumas himself with peculiar frankness generally enlighten us upon such points. Mademoiselle Mars, at the time of *Henri III*, was neither young nor pretty, but her long supremacy had made her an unflinching autocrat—a woman who knew her way and meant to get it. Considering no doubt that by undertaking a *rôle* she put the author of the play under a serious obligation, she resented strongly any interference of his either with the cast of the subordinate characters or with her own interpretation of her part. One or two squabbles of this sort occurred with *Henri III*, but the most typical instances which Dumas records belong to the rehearsals of *Hernani*, at some of which he was present. Hugo, it may be imagined, was not likely to efface himself as the author; Mademoiselle Mars on her side, a recent and only half-hearted convert to the Romantic drama, could hardly tolerate some of what seemed to her its absurdities; every day when they came to the line in which Doña Sol says to Hernani, "Vous êtes, mon lion, superbe et généreux," the actress would interrupt the rehearsal, and advancing to the footlights would lean over and argue with the author, who was sitting in an orchestra stall, her point being that to

call Hernani "my lion" was ridiculous and would certainly be hissed, whereas "monseigneur" would be a safe and suitable amendment. Hugo, rising politely from his seat, adhered to his version, preferring the more rare to the commonplace, and justifying the expression as natural to the character and the circumstances. Mademoiselle Mars would then make pretence of being convinced, and the rehearsal would proceed. But she never intended to risk "mon lion," and when the first night came she took care to say "monseigneur"—very like a woman and an actress, as Hugo no doubt thought. This incident, however, was only one in a series of disputes, so acute that the author at last requested Mademoiselle Mars to resign the part, the audacity of which proposal and the bare prospect of being supplanted by a younger and more attractive woman so staggered the lady that henceforth she treated Hugo with considerable though lofty respect. With Dumas, who though more effervescent stood less upon his dignity than Hugo, the famous actress had many a passage at arms, notably (as will appear later) in regard to *Antony*: but these temporary disagreements neither impaired Dumas' esteem for her nor affected the cordial praise he bestowed upon her as thoroughly "honest and reliable," in the sense that she always did her very best for whatever play she was engaged in, and was prompt and business-like in her professional affairs. "Only once," he says, "in her career was Mademoiselle Mars known to be late for rehearsal: on that occasion she apologised for being fifteen minutes behind time by explaining that she had just lost forty thousand francs!" Her professional "straightness" seemed the more laudable to Dumas by contrast with a few unpleasant experiences of the contrary. It was known that some actors were not above "riding for a fall," or, in other words, playing in-

differently in order to damage a piece in which their own interests did not lie. Moreover the system of the Français by which only a portion of the *sociétaires* had parts in any particular play, naturally fostered jealousy among the other portion. The most scandalous instance of this occurred in the performance of Dumas' *Caligula*. To the astonishment of all a certain line was greeted by one loud hiss proceeding from the very *claque* which had been engaged to applaud ; an inquiry followed, and the leader of the *claque* declared that his men had only done their duty to both sides, for while the actors who were playing had hired them to applaud, those who were not playing had equally hired them to hiss! Disgust at intrigues like these—if not generally quite so barefaced—led Dumas on one occasion to declare that "the Théâtre Français was a circle of the Inferno which Dante had forgotten to mention." But this is an exceptional strain, and from such unpleasant topics he quickly turns to the more congenial task of describing the easy affability of Mademoiselle Mars in her dressing-room at the theatre, where after the play she was wont to receive her friends and chat with them while making her toilette ; or the statuesque beauty of Mademoiselle Georges, whose two chief characteristics were an indolence which led her to spend her time (when not engaged at the theatre) on luxurious sofas with countless cushions, and a cleanliness which made it a principle with her to perform a preliminary toilet before taking her bath *afin de ne pas salir l'eau!* For just as *Henri III* had introduced him to the first of these two, so *Christine* began his acquaintance with the famous *tragédienne* who had been admired or adored by Napoleon and various other sovereigns. Interesting figures to Dumas both of them, but neither so admirable to him personally or artistically as the actress who comes next on the list. His first meeting in

private life with this lady was so curiously emotional as to deserve notice. "I was returning home late one night after the performance of *Christine*, when a cab overtook me, a woman's head was thrust out, and a woman's voice said, "Is that M. Dumas?" "Yes, that is my name." "Ah! then, you must come here and embrace me! what talent you have! yes, and you *do* understand women!"

This impulsive lady was no less a person than Madame Dorval, already celebrated for her impersonation of melodramatic parts, and soon to fill the most melodramatic of all as Adèle in *Antony*. Her spontaneous greeting, however oddly it may strike on colder natures, was one of the memories which Dumas cherished most fondly: for the pleasure it gave him he couples it with Michelet's well known tribute, that "he was one of the forces of nature." And this midnight meeting was the beginning of a friendship, the reality of which Dumas attested some years later when poor Madame Dorval, who had fallen on evil days, died in such poverty that the funds to provide her with decent burial were not forthcoming. To raise the amount Dumas exerted himself to the utmost; and after contributing his own store of ready cash—which, as often, was not great—he ran hither and thither about Paris to get subscriptions, until he had succeeded in his object. He also paid a tribute to the memory of this actress by writing the account of her, which he called *La dernière année de Marie Dorval.*

Such then are a few specimens, taken from a large stock, which may serve to illustrate the society—literary, artistic, and especially theatrical—in which Dumas now moved. They are merely specimens, by no means exhaustive, but intended rather partly to prepare the reader for similar references in the future, and partly to justify—if justification be needed—Dumas' claim that he had mingled with all

sorts and conditions of men and women, and that there wer few persons of any importance whom he had not known That is true, and his recollections are none the less attractiv because we can discern in them some flavour of the *quorur pars magna fui* sentiment.

CHAPTER V

A POLITICAL INTERLUDE

(1830–1832)

IN virtue of his position as a dramatist, Dumas had now become a regular "firstnighter" at the play; he had the *entrée* of all the chief theatres and rarely did he miss any production of importance. Sometimes (for among his friends he numbered several festive souls who combined a love of literature with a fondness for lamp-smashing and other practical jokes)—sometimes his exuberant spirits got him into trouble. At the performance, for example, of Arnault's *Pertinax*, he nearly came to blows with a neighbour over the merits of the play, insomuch that he was gravely lectured by the *Journal de Paris*, which recommended him to cultivate a more philosophic temper, or, if he could not control his feelings, to stay away from "first nights." Hereon Dumas observes: "I was too young at that time, and my heart was too near to my head to admit of my taking this good advice: also I was too inquisitive to avoid first nights. That is a weakness which I have got over by now; but time has been necessary to effect the cure, and after all it is not time that has cured me so much as those functions themselves."

A trifling episode like this may illustrate the ebullient nature which made Dumas now turn his attention from the drama of the stage to that of the streets. As yet he



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A LITHOGRAPH FROM NATURE BY [illegible] PUBLISHED [illegible]

took politics lightly. He professed himself, indeed, of the same creed as his father—a republican—but the republicanism of 1830 was a mild affair compared with that of 1790. At any rate it was sufficient for him that the Government of Charles X. was hostile to literature. That Government had just undertaken the conquest of Algiers as a diversion from domestic discontent. In vain: for, though Algiers was annexed, the Polignac Ministry continued to be a mark for the attacks of newspapers of all opposition shades, from the staid and elderly *Journal des Débats* to the youthful and flippant *Figaro*, whose contributors already included men like Alphonse Karr, Nestor Roqueplan, Jules Janin. The crisis, as every one knows, anticipated expectation: it was brought on by the celebrated "Ordinances" drawn up at St. Cloud, and published to an astounded Paris in the *Moniteur* of July 26.[1] The men of the Opposition—the recognized leaders who had been working for some such issue—men like Royer Collard, Guizot, Casimir Périer—were altogether taken by surprise, and shrinking from stronger measures contented themselves with written protests which seemed to the ardour of the populace a very inadequate remedy. Like the rest of the uninitiated public, Dumas was unprepared for coming events. He had in fact made all his arrangements for a trip to Algiers, and was intending to start on the afternoon of that very Monday, when his friend Achille Comte came rushing into his room at 8 a.m. to tell him about the Ordinances in the *Moniteur*. The prospect of excitement nearer home determined him at once to give up his tour. Calling his servant, he said, "Joseph, go

[1] The suppression of certain Liberal newspapers, the dissolution of the recently elected Chamber before it had even met, and the diminution of the electorate, these were the chief points in the "Ordinances."

round to the gunsmith's and bring back my gun, with 200 bullets, calibre 20."

Thus began Dumas the politician. For the moment he had to explain his alteration of plans to a very particular lady friend of his, Mademoiselle Mélanie S., an actress to whom Firmin had introduced him, and for whom he was trying to get an engagement. His *liaison* with this lady lasted a considerable time, and seems to have left nothing but pleasant memories behind it—to judge from the complacent tone of his own references.[1] Mdlle. Mélanie was informed that as curiosity had prompted his visit to Algiers, so curiosity was now equally the motive which kept him in France: he would be unable therefore to take her to Marseilles. Was she annoyed that a man should advance an excuse which is regarded as the monopoly of her own sex? In any case Dumas, deserting Venus for Mars, set himself to reconnoitre the field of possible enterprise. A stroll through the streets that morning revealed no signs of anything unusual: friends laughed at the double-barrelled gun and the 200 bullets. At the Palais Royal nothing was to be learned: at the Café du Roi frequented by journalists of the Royalist press people were loud in praise of the Ordinances. Dumas knew several of these men, but not sharing their views, took no part in the talk: "I detest arguing with my friends," said he; "I prefer fighting with them." Some agitation was visible both at the Institute, whither he went in company with Étienne Arago, and on the Bourse, where the three per cents. fell heavily. In the garden

[1] The goodness of Heaven permitted me to retain from this association one of those living souvenirs which change sorrow into joy, tears into smiles!" The *souvenir vivant* was Marie Alexandre Dumas, born in 1831, who afterwards became Mme. Olinde Petel and enjoyed some reputation in Art and Letters. She died in 1880, leaving no children.

of the Palais Royal, after dinner at the Restaurant Véfour. he observed a group of young men standing on chairs and reading out the *Moniteur* to a scanty audience, inclined only to ridicule this imitation of Camille Desmoulins. At present it was in the offices of the suppressed newspapers that the gravity of the position was most felt: they had to decide whether they should defy the Government and appear as usual. The *Courier* set the example: not only did it publish itself but it published also a protest, "in the name of the Charter," signed by forty-five journalists belonging to the staffs of the principal Liberal papers, prominent among whom were Thiers and Mignet. Thus ended July 26. Next day, together with Armand Carrel—who despite his military antecedents scouted the idea of armed resistance—Dumas again sallied forth. Rumour and something of a crowd led their steps to the offices of *Le Temps*, whither a few mounted *gendarmerie* had come, instructed to seize the printing machinery of that journal. The editor, Baude, stands there with his colleagues, dignified and protesting. Politely and with many regrets the police officer, explaining that he must carry out his orders, summons a locksmith to open the door of the printing room; and as the man advances Baude majestically reads out that article of the Code on which he relies to protect his paper from this outrage. And lo! as he reads, the mechanic—whether awed by the language of the law or shuddering at the penalty of *travaux forcés* prescribed for burglary—doffs his cap, listens respectfully, and then exclaiming (like the Cimbrian slave sent to kill Marius), "This is no job for me"—drops his tool-bag and flees back incontinently into the crowd, which cheers amain. A second locksmith is sought, whom, reluctantly coming to the front, the bystanders divest of his tools, so that with a clear conscience and much relief he can

profess himself unable to deal with the door. But the police officer, tired of trifling, requisitions yet a third workman, forces the door, carries off the printing presses, and disperses the crowd, amid cries of 'Vive Baude!" "Vive la Charte!" which testify that, though brute force has triumphed, moral victory remains with the heroic editor.

Other journals were less bold, but the question of resistance by force was already being debated. After dinner that evening, Dumas—still with Carrel—was strolling along the Boulevards when they heard the sound of a distant volley from the direction of the Palais Royal. Carrel announced his intention of going home to bed, and advised Dumas to do likewise. "Not I," said our friend, and he hastened towards the sound. Meeting just then his friend Thibaut—now a well-established doctor—he learnt the news: there had been a cavalry charge, three or four men had been killed, a barricade had been begun, the tri-colour flag had flown. In the Place de la Bourse a picket of soldiers had been pelted with stones, and one of them had been provoked into firing, with the result that a woman was killed. Reaching the Café Gobillard, close to the Théâtre des Nouveautés, Dumas observed a small group of men advancing with Etienne Arago at their head, whose cry was "Close the theatres! Murder is being done in the streets; this is no time for amusements." They went first to the Nouveautés, where the performance was just beginning: thence they made a round of the Boulevard theatres, and turning out the audiences, partly by force, partly by appeal to sentiment, they contributed largely to force on a general conflict. A few street scuffles, some hustling of soldiers, and—as the night wore on—things quieted down. When Dumas walked home about midnight the streets were nearly deserted: but there was one significant sign of what the

morrow had in store—some dark figures flitting about the Rue de l'Échelle, like spirits of the night, stealthily and silently constructing a barricade: typical figures these of the men who immediately originate such Revolutions, obscure men of names unknown, who do their work and sink back into obscurity.

As Dumas had always predicted that the Ordinances would end in bloodshed, he felt now that his prophecy was nearer to fulfilment: and when he rose next day it was with intent to be an actor and no longer merely a spectator. Therefore—after a preliminary visit to his mother, whose blissful ignorance he did not disturb—he donned his *costume de chasse*, as being both convenient and ostensibly non-combatant. Gun, powder flask, bag, and some of the 200 bullets stuffed into his pockets, completed the equipment of the sportsman. The "sport" he found had already begun. Some young students of the École Polytechnique, after vainly trying to find the leaders they expected—Laffitte, Lafayette, or Casimir Périer—had set to work on their own account. A barricade had been thrown up, and to guard the barricade they had set—in frolicsome humour—a barber's dummy, seized from the shop of an unsympathetic *coiffeur*, decorated with a fresh newly-combed wig, and surmounted by a three-cornered hat. The novelty of Dumas' costume at once attracted attention: he became a sort of leader, and gave orders for the making of some amateur fortifications. Arms were called for: lack of arms was the weak point of would-be insurgents. Most timely, then, was the appearance of three soldiers of the Royal Guard. "There's your chance," shouted Dumas to his followers; "if you want arms, go and take them." A rush was made on the soldiers, who handed over themselves and their rifles with amazing promptness. The rifles, it is true

were found to be unloaded, and the prisoners were at once released as their captors did not know what to do with them. Still the triumph had been won: three guards captured, three rifles seized—it was a famous victory. While engaged in these martial exploits, Dumas made the acquaintance of Bixio, then a medical student, who had come out to break somebody's head or to get his own broken—prepared for either event. As they walked together Bixio remarked on his companion's rashness in going about, at such a crisis, with his gun. "Pooh!" said Dumas, "I am merely out as a sportsman, not as a combatant." "Yes," observed his friend, "but unfortunately the shooting season isn't open yet."

"Never mind," was the valorous reply; "I am going to open it—that's all." Yet, as he himself tells us, he was careful to combine with these sentiments a considerable discretion in action. In making his way about, he followed the by-streets and avoided the main thoroughfares. In these, especially the Rue de Richelieu, the tide of revolution was rising fast. People were running, gesticulating, shouting: from the windows women leaned out and shouted "bravos" to the armed citizens beneath. It was heard with indignation that the Duc de Raguse (once Marshal Marmont) had offered his services to the King to put down the insurgents. As a defiance some one had hoisted the republican flag on Notre Dame. The sight of this sacred emblem—though it was speedily hauled down—fired anew Dumas' patriotism. Volunteers gathered round him—two or three with guns, others with swords or pistols—a dozen perhaps at first, increased as they went to fifty, boasting two drums and a flag, and scraping together some powder and shot from the casual aid of mysterious well-wishers. The objective of Dumas and his merry men was

the Hôtel de Ville, where fighting was said to be going on; nor did anything oppose their progress until, as they emerged on the Quai aux Fleurs, they found arrayed against them what seemed to be a whole regiment of infantry. Prudence dictated a halt and a parley. As leader Dumas stepped forward, and was met by a captain from whom he requested permission for himself and his men to pass. In reply to the usual questions as to his destination and object, he declared that the one was the Hôtel de Ville and the other to fight. The officer laughed outright. "Really, M. Dumas, I didn't think you were quite as mad as all that." If it was ruffling to be called *fou*, it was gratifying to find one's name known to the gallant captain, who explained that he had been to see *Christine* one night when Dumas, who was in the house, had been pointed out to him as the author. "That being so," said Dumas, "we can discuss this matter as friends." "Exactly what I am doing," replied the officer, "and as a friend I advise you to disband your men and get off quietly." "Well, I'll go back and talk to them about it. Many thanks for your kindness; good-bye, and, by the way, don't forget to come and see my next play: if you want tickets for the first night, send to me at 25, Rue de l'Université."

After this pleasant affair of outposts, Dumas returned to his company and explained the position: they agreed that it was wiser to seek the Hôtel de Ville by some other way. Fifteen minutes later they came in sight of an attack being made over the Pont Notre Dame by a hundred citizens or so—an attack easily demolished by a few rounds of grape-shot from the troops. Whatever desire Dumas and his party may have had, as patriots, to re-inforce their repulsed friends, it was effectually dispelled by the sight of thirty or forty victims lying on the bridge dead or wounded, and

by the obvious intention of the soldiers to use bayonets if necessary. Therefore, "we retreated hastily; indeed, our retreat was very like a rout: my company had vanished like smoke, and there was no attempt to rally. This was my first experience of being under fire. I protest that the sensation is not pleasant, and if any one says otherwise I do not believe him."

In this quarter the rebels had met with scant success, and Dumas feeling that he had had enough for one day would fain have sought rest and refreshment in his house. But the fame of his deeds—that gun and those 200 bullets—had reached the ears of his landlord, who had strictly ordered the *concierge* not to admit M. Alexandre Dumas, as being a dangerous character and likely to imperil the character of the house. The landlord relented some hours later, but for the moment our warrior took refuge under the roof of a friend, where, as people came in from the outside, he learned the progress of events, and how the troops as they marched through the streets were being greeted with missiles hurled from the windows on their heads—chairs, cupboards, fireirons, even a piano! And while the people thus took its own way the Liberal leaders were occupied in negotiations; miserable leaders indeed they seemed to the men who were spilling their blood. By all means these academic gentlemen must be pushed on—must be compromised: otherwise the cause would be lost. To this end various steps were taken. Among others, Dumas affirms that he called on La Fayette. That veteran, without whom no revolution would be complete, avowed that he was tired of the Deputies: nothing could be done with them.

"Then why not act on your own account?" said Dumas.

"Well," replied the General, "make me act, and I am your man."

La Fayette only wanted to be pushed, and this saying being reported did much to encourage the Extremists, who, gathered together at the office of *Le National*, were even now preparing a master stroke which was nothing less than the creation—on paper—of a Provisional Government, consisting of La Fayette, Gérard, and the Duc de Choiseul. This "sublime forgery" was the work of Béranger and two others, who, that it might be complete, assigned to the imaginary triumvirate an imaginary proclamation calling the people to arms, and caused this to appear next day in the columns of the *Constitutionnel* and on the walls of Paris.

The proceedings of the 29th—the decisive day of the July Revolution—are well known. In the easy invasion of the Artillery Museum, weakly defended, Dumas took part; and finding it impossible to prevent the mob from helping itself to the various weapons procurable from that store-house of antiquities, he concluded that some of these objects would be as safe for the time being in his custody as in that of any one else. So he lifted for himself a buckler, helmet and sword which had belonged to Francis I, and an arquebus of Charles IX—the one which that monarch was said to have used against the Huguenots—and a few other articles, all which he hereafter restored to their rightful places. Clad in these treasures of the past, and bending under their weight, he returned to his house, a curious object in the eyes of his servant Joseph. The real excitement was now beginning. It is on record how the troops of the Government were found to be fraternizing with the populace, how rifles and bullets were procured and barrels of powder brought up, and how—for the making of cartridges—willing hands poured down from the windows

paper in reams and volumes. (Dumas—sad fate for a poet! —was heavily battered by a *Gradus ad Parnassum*.) "To the Louvre" was the general cry—to the Louvre defended, as in the great Revolution, by faithful Swiss guards. The assault was made on four different lines. Dumas happened to be in that party which attacked by way of the Pont des Arts, and was repulsed. During the fight on the bridge he sought cover behind one of the bronze lions adjoining the fountain of the Palais Mazarin, from which position, at first secure, he surveyed the scene with a theatrical eye, taking an occasional shot as opportunity offered. The Louvre was enveloped in a cloud of smoke, concealing its defenders from view, "as completely as those painted clouds which at the end of the play serve to hide from the public the transformation scene being prepared behind." But the Pont des Arts soon became untenable, and the shelter of the lion inadequate, so that Dumas was glad to slip into the side door of the Institute on his left, where he found himself among friends who had apartments in that building. Here, receiving the hospitality of Madame Guyet-Desfontaines, and refreshed by a bottle of Bordeaux and a bowl of chocolate, he told his story to the company. Great was the temptation to linger in this Capua: but, whether from curiosity or heroism, he resisted it, and set forth again on his adventures. First he called at his own lodgings to replenish ammunition. A complete change was noticeable in the attitude of his landlord and the *concierge*, the latter receiving him with respectful admiration. Even Joseph, so supercilious at first over the armour of King Francis, was now observed to be dusting it carefully, and condescended to remark that it was very fine. The reason of this altered demeanour was soon apparent. The din in the streets grew louder; and Dumas, looking out from his

window into the Rue du Bac, saw fluttering in the garden of the Tuileries, like a prodigious covey of pigeons, countless papers and letters—the correspondence of Napoleon, Louis XVIII and Charles X, which the mob had got hold of, and was casting to the winds. It was clear that the Tuileries had been taken. This success was the work of that one of the four attacking columns which had approached the Louvre by the Quai de l'École, led by Godefroy Cavaignac and Joubert ; and it was due partly to the valour of the assailants, still more to the good luck of a momentary weakening in the defence caused by a misunderstood order. The Louvre being taken, it was easy to break down the door leading from the Picture Gallery into the Tuileries. The troops retired, Marmont hastening to St. Cloud to break the sad news to the King. Through the Palace the people swarmed, admiring much but doing little damage. They did indeed appropriate some Court gowns and feather hats from the wardrobes of the Royal Duchesses, arrayed in which four men performed a quadrille, to the delight of the crowd : but this was mere light-heartedness. They laughed, they jested, they embraced one another : Dumas, like the rest, was astonished at his own moderation ; and his good humour was increased by finding in the library of the Duchesse de Berry—and stamped with her arms—a handsomely bound copy of *Christine*, which showed that even the Bourbons were not deficient in taste. And while these events were in progress at the Tuileries, at the Hôtel de Ville, now in the hands of the people, a Committee of patriots (headed by that same Barde of the *National*) had been establishing a provisional Government, issuing proclamations, parading bogus generals in borrowed uniforms—doing everything, in short, to keep the Revolution in full swing. The remaining incidents of the July days need only a brief

summary: the meeting of Liberal deputies at Laffitte's house—the appointment of La Fayette to the command of Paris—the belated repentance of the King, his futile attempt to revoke the Ordinances and substitute for the Polignac the Mortemart-Gérard Ministry—the negotiations with the Duc d'Orléans who during these days lay quiet at Neuilly where he received the celebrated note from Laffitte, offering him instant choice of a crown or a passport—the Duke's indecision and his acceptance finally of Talleyrand's advice—the establishment, at last, of the July "Monarchy" by a compromise accepted without enthusiasm, and simply as being the least of various evils. The theoretical Republicans, compelled to justify themselves for making a king, took refuge in metaphors or sententious aphorisms. Popular monarchy might be taken as an instalment towards a Republic. "The Duke of Orleans is the best of Republics," said Odilon Barrot. "I have done," said Béranger, "what the Savoyards do when there is a storm: I have thrown a plank over the torrent." It is a curious by-thought that two poets should have played such important parts at the beginning and at the end of this most unpoetic monarchy, ushered in now by Béranger, and destined to be ushered out eighteen years later by Lamartine. As a whole the Revolution of July was a poor affair, of which no one could be very proud—a feeble parody of the great Revolution whose banners and watchwords it adopted to cover its own nakedness. There was no question here of Liberty and the Rights of Man, but merely of checking the recrudescence—ever so slight—of absolutism and priestly influence. The result was to remove from the throne one scrupulous but rather stupid old man, and to set in his place another more clever if not quite so honest, who was soon to find that the love of the *bourgeois* could not compen-

sate for the lost prestige of "the elder branch." Dumas' general reflections on the subject are sufficiently just. He is severe also (with the addition of some personal feeling caused by subsequent slights) upon the Prince who so readily and so quickly falsified the loyalty he had promised to his Bourbon cousin. Otherwise agreeing in all principal facts with the narratives of professed historians like Louis Blanc, the pages of Dumas present perhaps the best picture ever penned of what Paris in Revolution times looked like. The picture of course is coloured—it would be ungracious to say over-coloured—by the personality of the narrator, and the grouping of it is so arranged as to show us La Fayette, Laffitte, Odilon Barrot and the rest flitting like pale shadows across a scene mainly occupied by Alexandre Dumas. But what matters that? The hero does not brag unduly, nor does he — as some have falsely said— represent himself as a fighter of unqualified valour and a patriot of reckless self-sacrifice. On the contrary, the position he claims is that of an amateur moved mainly by curiosity, and occasionally carried by impulse into action. When he felt afraid he confesses the fact, when he took shelter from the bullets he tells us so, when he retreated he owns that he acted from prudence. It is true that he compares himself at different times to Xenophon, to Hannibal, to Caesar and to Napoleon: but who is so blunt to the sense of humour as not to perceive that the vein is mock-heroic, and one of the most delightful specimens of that style which can anywhere be found?

These observations apply primarily to the general account of events in Paris, but they may be extended—with discrimination—to that one episode of the July Revolution which belongs peculiarly to Dumas and the general authenticity of which he was able, when challenged, to establish

beyond doubt. Here he did take the leading part, and he makes the most of it.

It is possible that there may be in the present day quite a number of people who have never heard of the famous raid on the powder magazine of Soissons. Yet this affair, or escapade, briefly chronicled at the time of its occurrence, became widely notorious when Dumas' own account of it was published in 1853, and formed a fruitful subject for writers in periodical literature all over the world. This was how it happened. It was about 1 p.m. on July 30, when the Louvre and the Hôtel de Ville were now in the hands of the people, that Dumas heard La Fayette remarking on the scarcity of ammunition in Paris—a want which (said he) would prevent any effective resistance should the King pluck up courage to return at the head of his troops. At once Dumas approached the General, offering to go and obtain a supply of powder, and suggesting Soissons as a place where there was sure to be plenty. La Fayette, taken aback, could only ejaculate, " Fou ! Fou ! " But our friend was getting accustomed to being called " fou." He pressed his point, and induced La Fayette to sign a pass " admitting the bearer to the presence of General Gérard "—the military member of the supposed-to-be Provisional Government. Dumas, as the passport was written by himself, had no difficulty, after getting La Fayette's signature, in adding next to " General Gérard " the words " to whom we recommend the proposal he makes." Then to find Gérard, who on learning particulars of the scheme was amazed, as well he might be, at La Fayette's recommendation. Yet he, too, after poohpoohing the plan and pointing out that Dumas ran a good risk of being taken and shot, yielded at last to importunity and signed the following mandate, drafted for him by Dumas : " The military authorities of the town of

Soissons are requested to hand over at once to M. Alexandre Dumas whatever powder there may be in the magazine or elsewhere in the town. Paris, this 30th day of July, 1830." Having signed this document, Gérard turned away to other business, while Dumas promptly inserted just over the signature the magic words "Minister of War." Back again now to La Fayette, before whom he triumphantly flourished Gérard's order. The veteran was tickled by that "Minister of War," but thought it distinctly a good idea. Asked to add a few words recommending the bearer to the citizens of Soissons, he wrote something of the usual sort—"a fraternal appeal to the patriotism and devotion of the citizens."

So far, so good. But it was now three o'clock, and the gates of Soissons, as a military depôt, were rigidly closed at eleven: eight hours therefore remained to accomplish the sixty miles journey. Bounding down the steps of the Hôtel de Ville Dumas comes upon a young painter of his acquaintance, Bard by name, "a handsome youth of eighteen, with a face calm and impassive as marble." The statuesque Bard was contemplating the scene before him, regretting that he had contributed so little to it.

"There is still plenty to do," said Dumas; "come along with me."

"With you! why what to do?"

"To get yourself shot."

The prospect thus bluntly stated might to meaner minds have needed explanation, but it was sufficient for Bard, who seems to have been a model of passive obedience.

"Right you are," he said, and was then despatched to Dumas' house to fetch his horse and pistols, with which he was to proceed to Le Bourget—the first stage on the road to Soissons—where the two were to meet. (It would have been tedious, if not impossible, to get a carriage through the

streets at that moment encumbered with barricades, but the horse would be useful in case of difficulty in getting a post-chaise at Le Bourget.) Meanwhile Dumas hastened on foot to La Villette, and there engaged a cab to take him to Le Bourget. The horse was an inferior beast, for which reason also his name was "Polignac": so the driver—a good patriot—explained, and being admitted into confidence by Dumas he took it out of poor Polignac in blows and curses to such effect that within an hour they had reached Le Bourget. Here the master of the posting-house was sounded and found to be of the right sort, so much impressed when he saw the orders from La Fayette and Gérard that he at once offered his own *cabriolet* and ordered horses to be put to. As Bard had not yet arrived a happy thought occurred to Dumas: why not have a flag—a tri-colour flag? The innkeeper pointed to a draper's over the way; and the draper having supplied the necessary three shades, a flag was stitched together, nailed on to a broomstick, and fastened to the hood of the *cabriolet*. All this in ten minutes, by which time Bard was seen galloping up with horse and pistols.

It was now 4.45, and not a moment to lose. Leaving their horse in charge of mine host, the two friends started in the postchaise at full speed, and covered the first ten miles to Le Mesnil in exactly one hour. The next two stages were equally successful; and as, with flag waving and shouts of *Vive la République!* they dashed through the villages, the country-folk stared open-mouthed. Only in the brief stoppages for change of horses and postillion had they time to give to the little crowd that gathered round a summary of events. "Louvre taken—Bourbons fled—Provisional Government established—Hurrah for the Republic!" It was not till after leaving Nanteuil that the first check occurred.

At that place there had fallen to their lot a crabbed and surly old postboy who, whether from professional dignity or because he disapproved of the flag under which he travelled, doggedly refused to proceed at more than the regulation pace. Expostulation proving vain, Dumas stopped the chaise, descended and cut a stout branch from a tree by the wayside; then, resuming his seat, applied the stick so vigorously to the horses that their slow trot became a fast trot and their fast trot a gallop, despite all the efforts of the rider to hold them back. Naturally, in this helpless position, the good man's feelings grew more bitter and his language more emphatic. Dumas continued to whack, Bard to cheer him on, the postboy to swear, until as luck would have it the stick snapped in two and the rider thus regained control of his animals. His turn had now come. He deliberately pulled up, and protesting against the cruelty of such a pace announced his intention of unharnessing the horses and taking them home, leaving the vehicle and its occupants to do what they liked. This crisis—with Soissons still so far away,—demanded prompt action.

"Bard," called Dumas, "hand me one of the pistols."

"It is not loaded," whispered Bard in amazement.

"I know that . . . I am going to load it," replied the other.

The postboy laughed: he was not to be frightened by this farce. "No! no!" said he, "you don't pistol a man for taking care of his horses." And he dismounted.

Dumas was quickly charging the weapon—with blank cartridge; which done, he turned to the man.

"Now," said he, "have you a wife and family?"

"Oh! yes," answered the postboy, "there's the wife, and there's four children, and——" He was proceeding to give family details, while his hand drew near to the harness.

"Stop!" said Dumas in a voice of thunder, "touch those traces and I blow your brains out."

"Hah! hah!" the man laughed, "those tricks aren't good enough for me." And he seized the traces. Bang went the pistol right in his face, down fell the postboy flat on his back—unhurt of course, but from sheer fright fancying himself killed.

Bard was like to die of laughter, while Dumas proceeded to divest his prostrate foe of the *spolia opima*—the professional boots—which he pulled on to his own feet. Then mounting he galloped off, just casting one glance back on the postboy who, having come to his senses, was now sitting up, rubbing himself and looking round with the air of one pained and aggrieved at such untoward events.

Henceforward they went fast. At the next stage a willing postillion was obtained, amused rather than deterred by the fate of his predecessor; and as the summer day declined they approached Villers-Cotterets. Here Dumas was among his own people, a prophet certainly not without honour. They crowded round him, and would have it that he should stay to supper. After all there appeared to be no desperate hurry. For among the friends who greeted him was one Hutin, a resident of Soissons but staying just then at Villers-Cotterets; and this Hutin offered to accompany Dumas and Bard on the rest of their journey, declaring that he knew the gatekeeper of Soissons and could get admission at any hour—at least up to one o'clock. So there was time for supper, provided by Cartier, Paillet, and other old friends, to whom Dumas narrated the stirring tale of the last three days in Paris, and then explained his own particular business in going to Soissons. Thereat the company (we are told) expostulated with one voice on the peril of this enterprise; for Soissons was a stronghold of Royalism, and the Re-



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A DRAWING FROM NATURE BY MAURI

publican who should go there would be thrusting his head into the lion's mouth. But Dumas was not to be turned aside by the warnings of friend or foe. He ordered a dinner to be ready against his return next evening, and then, accompanied by Hutin and Bard, continued his journey, reaching Soissons after midnight, where the porter admitted them on Hutin's request, "little thinking that he was thereby admitting the Revolution."

Once inside the town and received in the house of Hutin's mother, they occupied the small hours of the night in manufacturing that essential standard of all revolutions—the tricolour flag, for which materials were supplied by the red curtains of the dining-room, the blue ditto of the drawing-room, and a sheet from the linen-press. Before daybreak it was ready, and Dumas planned the campaign with his two colleagues. Their part was to proceed to the Cathedral, gain entrance to the tower as though wishing to see the sunrise from its top, and being there they were to tear down the Bourbon flag and substitute the Republican. His own business was to look after the powder. Accordingly, having first reconnoitred the ground, he waited until the hoisting of the flag showed the success of his friends; then, jumping over the enclosure of the powder magazine, he appeared—armed with his gun—before a Captain and a Sergeant who were lounging in the garden. To them, and to a Colonel of Engineers who soon arrived on the scene, he stated his object, and showed the order signed by General Gérard. These officers, it seemed, were in sympathy with the Paris movement; and when Dumas pointed to the flag now flying from the Cathedral tower they assured him that their hearts beat responsively. They promised at any rate a benevolent neutrality: let him see the military Governor of the town, who alone could sanction the handing over of the powder.

By now Bard had returned to find his friend: him Dumas —the two having first dragged into position and loaded a small artillery piece lying near—left as sentry over the magazine, with instructions how, in case of intrusion, to fire the gun without blowing himself to bits. Then to the house of M. le Vicomte de Liniers, the Governor, whither he was escorted by a bodyguard of three or four Soissons patriots. To the Governor, a staunch Royalist, Dumas—untidy, travel-stained, and excited—seemed an amusing object. His Excellency smiled at the signature of Gérard; he knew nothing of the Provisional Government, and cared less; finally, he declared there was nothing in the magazine worth taking—perhaps a couple of hundred cartridges or so. Dumas knew better: he was aggravated also by a tone of polite irony which evidently considered the whole affair a joke. So he enlightened M. de Liniers on what had already happened, adding moreover that the officers in charge of the magazine had given their *parole* to offer no resistance to his demand. The conversation grew prolonged and acrimonious. The Governor had beside him his secretary and two officers; Dumas was alone, but in his pockets carried allies worth all the rest—a brace of double-barrelled pistols. At last, to end the matter, he made a quick movement backwards towards the door, drew out his weapons, cocked them, and pointing one in each hand, said, as he stepped forward again, "I give you five seconds, gentlemen: then, if the order is not signed, I blow out the brains of every one of you, beginning with you, M. le Commandant. One—two—three——" Just then a side door was flung open, and a lady burst wildly into the room, crying out to the Governor: "For God's sake, dear, give him what he wants. It is those blacks revolting again—we shall all have our throats cut—I know it—think of what happened to my dear father and mother—satisfy him, I implore you!"

This lady was the Governor's wife, doubtless attracted to the room by the raised voices and threatening words. Her reference to the rising of the negroes, Dumas, puzzled for the moment, afterwards understood on hearing that when a girl she had seen both her parents cruelly massacred during a revolt of the natives in St. Domingo. "My frizzly hair," he adds, "my complexion naturally dark and now deepened by three days' exposure to the sun, the slight *créole* accent of my voice—these had made her take me for a negro, and recalled to her the horrors of that early scene."

Would any one but Dumas have recorded, with such perfect equanimity and sense of humour, an episode which made so good a jest at his own expense? Madame de Liniers proved, however, to be the *dea ex machinâ* in solving this complication. Gallantry forbad the continuance of such a scene before a lady; and the Governor, who probably had never intended the matter to go so far, and who doubtless knew that the people of Soissons—including his own garrison—were on the side of the Revolution, merely stipulated that for the sake of form he must appear to have yielded to "superior force." Hutin therefore was fetched in with one or two others who served to constitute *force majeure*, and the order for delivering up the powder was duly made out. It remained only, as a matter of courtesy, to consult the Mayor; but as this official interposed delays and put forward all sorts of objections to depleting the town of its ammunition, the end of it was that Dumas and his friends, losing patience, battered in the doors of the magazine, and taking thence numerous barrels of gunpowder loaded the same on waggons and conveyed them out through the city gates, the townsfolk meanwhile thronging round with cheers and many of them escorting the adventurers as far as Villers-Cotterets. Paris was reached without incident, and next morning, after

an absence of forty-four hours, Dumas found himself again at the Hôtel de Ville, where La Fayette was occupied in the business—necessary to these occasions—of embracing all and sundry.

Things were just then at an intermediate stage. The Duc d'Orléans was for the moment Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, pending the negotiations with Charles at Rambouillet which ended in the old King's abdication and the accession of his cousin. With the object of checking any reactionary hopes a tumultuous expedition, in which Dumas took part, was made from Paris by a mixed multitude of citizens and National Guards, but it turned back before reaching Rambouillet on learning that the abdication was accomplished. The more difficult task of getting the Republican populace to accept King Log instead of King Stork was managed chiefly by La Fayette's influence over the masses, and thus the Moderates were rescued from the unenviable plight indicated by Benjamin Constant's gloomy foreboding that "by this time to-morrow we shall all be hung." The prediction proved incorrect: no one was hung —however many deserved to be—nor on the other hand was any one very triumphant: only the best had been made of a poor job. And so it fell out that the Soissons powder was not needed after all; but when Dumas on the morrow of his return waited upon the new Lieutenant-General of the realm he was rewarded by his old patron with a gracious grasp of the hand and the remark, "Well done, M. Dumas, you have executed your best drama!"

Louis Philippe was known to possess a happy turn of phrase. The Soissons affair was in fact a *beau drame*, including some pronounced elements of farce. It was also a thing that really happened, and it could be attested by other authorities than that of the principal actor. There is,

first of all, the official account published in the *Moniteur* of August 9, 1830, in the form of a report addressed to La Fayette, signed by Dumas and five others. This is a comparatively concise and plain document, and of course it was drawn up by Dumas himself; but the point is that no contradiction of it was forthcoming at the time, when there must have been—even allowing for the excited and preoccupied condition of France—hundreds of people in a position to know the facts. And confirmation from an entirely independent source is supplied by a *History of Soissons*, published in 1837, in which there is a fuller account of the same events, agreeing in all essentials with the story given in Dumas' *Memoirs*, and published in 1853. Finally, there is the protest made in a letter addressed to *La Presse* (the paper in which the memoirs were appearing) by a son of the former Governor of Soissons, the Chevalier de Liniers, who wrote with the object of vindicating his father's memory from any aspersions which the events as recounted by Dumas might possibly imply. The contentions of the Chevalier, who claims to have been present on the occasion, are (1) that the town of Soissons was already full of Republican ardour; (2) that the Governor had at his disposal not a complete garrison of eight hundred men but merely a detachment of a company, the bulk of the regiment being in Paris, and that the few soldiers in Soissons were, equally with their comrades in Paris, disaffected to the Bourbon Government; (3) that the Governor, before Dumas' arrival, had foreseen a rising in the town, and had decided beforehand how to act; (4) that, pursuing his predetermined plan, he did not hand over the arsenal to Dumas, or influenced by his threats, but to a deputation of the Soissons National Guard—the men, in fact, who accompanied Dumas. It is obvious that none of these points is inconsistent with the

version of our author. The first and second are admitted by him, the third is unimportant, the fourth involves only a question of form, in which also it agrees with our account. Nobody—Dumas least of all—wished to accuse M. de Liniers of cowardice: the poor man simply acted as he did because there was nothing else for him to do. Putting these things together—the two separate accounts and the attempted *démenti*—the most they amount to in the way of qualification is that Dumas does not make so prominent as he might those circumstances—e.g. the help he got from the Soissons people—which rendered his mission more easy and less dangerous. Perhaps we could hardly expect him to do so: he might well leave some details to the imagination of his readers. There is at any rate no evidence of a deliberate *suppressio veri*, and the strictest criticism will have to admit that he was justified by fact, as well as by artistic considerations, in assigning to himself the lion's share of the business. It was a dashing bit of work, quite in the "Musketeer" style, and one so especially French in its characteristics that we more cold-blooded people can barely realize it, unless perchance by reverting to the sort of thing we might possibly have done in the hot period of "undergraduate" days. His own sense of achievement and satisfaction Dumas summed up in a hurried note to a lady (believed to be his friend Mélanie S.) ending thus: "Ma position est maintenant belle et bonne"; which autograph letter, signed "Ton Alex," and dated August 2, 1830, was fifty years later considered as a "human document" to be worth sixty-one francs when it was sold at auction in 1882.

To descend from the height of these brave deeds to the lower level of political jobbery is something of an anti-climax. Dumas found it so, and all the more because in the arrangements now going forward there was no demand

for his services. To resume literature was at this moment out of the question: the political fever still possessed him and needed to work itself off. What should he do? Paris and its intrigues disgusted him, he says, and no doubt disappointed him. But, away from Paris and the place-hunters, it occurred to him that he might do something to forward the Republican cause; for, like Hugo and others, he still believed that the Orleanist rule, monarchic in name, might be a republic in fact. His thoughts turned to La Vendée as a fruitful field of patriotic labour—and yet not wholly patriotic, for, as he adds with charming candour, "Perhaps I came to this conclusion because I wanted a reason for travelling through and seeing that part of the country."

There was no difficulty in getting a "mission" to La Vendée or anywhere else: La Fayette had his pocket full of missions. So to La Fayette Dumas went, lunched with him and explained his idea, which was, briefly, to establish a democratic force in that traditional centre of Royalism, by forming a Vendean National Guard which might serve to prevent possible Bourbon attempts.

"Have you thought the matter out?" asked La Fayette.

"Yes, General, I have, so far as I am capable of thinking anything out, but I am a man of instinct, not of reflection."

The General observed that to organize a Royalist National Guard to check Royalist movements seemed an extravagant application of the principle on which a thief is set to catch a thief. He did not, however, press his objection: there was no harm at least in making the experiment. Dumas therefore, after enjoying his luncheon and conversation with this "excellent worthy and noble veteran," received from him a duly signed commission, in which "Monsieur Alex-

andre Dumas was authorized, as 'Special Envoy,' to go through the departments of La Vendée, La Loire-Inférieure, Morbihan and Maine-et-Loire; and to take measures in concert with the local authorities of these departments for the formation of a National Guard."

"I suppose I may wear a uniform of some kind?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes," said the General, "you can get something if you like in the nature of an aide-de-camp's, but I warn you that uniforms are dangerous things, and are liable to invite shots from behind hedges." The caution fell, of course, on deaf ears: what was the use of being "Envoy Extraordinary" unless you could have a uniform?

And it so happened that on leaving La Fayette's Dumas ran across a friend whose new and effective costume at once struck his fancy—shako with tricolour plumes, silver epaulettes, silver belt, blue coat and trousers. Nothing could be more opportune. He asked his friend what this fine uniform might be, and was told that it was that of the Mounted National Guard—a design just invented by the gentleman himself for a force not yet in existence. To get the tailor's address and to order a complete outfit of the same was the work of half an hour. Then the "Special Envoy" went to say good-bye to his mother, whom he had not seen much of late. The good and peaceful lady had just become aware that things had been happening in Paris, and as she understood that the Duc d'Orléans was likely to become king, she saw an opportunity for the advancement of her son and her son-in-law, unaware that the son was already convincing himself that his career at the Palais Royal was closed, so much did he profess disapproval of the change from Dukedom to Royalty.

On August 10 Dumas started on his mission, Blois, Tours,

Angers being his first halting-places. At the last named town he found the Assizes going on ; and an unfortunate peasant from La Vendée, condemned to penal servitude for trying—under stress of dire poverty—to pass counterfeit coin, so enlisted his sympathy that he then and there wrote off to his friend Oudard and to another member of the Orléans household begging them to use all influence with the King and Queen for getting the man's pardon, and pointing out also that such an act would be good policy at this particular time in view of conciliating La Vendée. He stayed with friends at Angers until he had received a favourable reply, and then proceeded to Meurs, Beaulieu, Beaumont, and Chemillé. He observed, in proportion as he advanced, the changing effects produced by his uniform, which formed a kind of thermometer of political feeling. In Paris and the neighbourhood it had roused enthusiasm, further on admiration, at later stages mere curiosity, and finally absolute hostility. He was already remembering La Fayette's words and meditating the advisability of putting on his *costume de chasse*, when suddenly, while going along a lonely road, he heard himself hailed from behind by the panting voice of some one evidently eager to overtake him. Who could this be in a neighbourhood where he did not know a soul ? He waited till the man had come up, and, behold ! it was the convict whose pardon he had procured, and who, directly he was set at liberty, had inquired the direction taken by Dumas and made haste to follow him and render thanks. The man's gratitude took a practical turn, for he insisted on attending his benefactor as a voluntary guide in a country where a guide was very necessary. From this Chouan peasant, and others whom he met and talked to in the villages, Dumas—having now laid aside his uniform in deference to his friend—picked up many a tale

of the undying enmity between *Les Blancs* and *Les Bleus*, which we read about in several of his books.

He was able to get a real insight into the ways of the Vendean country folk. These he found now—as they had been in 1792—ignorant, simple-minded, blindly devoted to their priests and to the Bourbons; and he was convinced that no scheme such as he had undertaken was feasible. "I was the first man," he says in his preface to *Napoléon Bonaparte*, "to enter La Vendée in the uniform of the National Guard. Cries of 'Vive Charles X!' greeted me everywhere. That country at least is loyal and does not change." The substance of this opinion he embodied in a report addressed to La Fayette and handed on by him to the King, in which he recommended a policy of making roads and opening up means of communication as the best method of civilizing La Vendée and bringing it into touch with the rest of France.

After six weeks of moving about from place to place, including a stay at Nantes, Dumas returned to Paris, where he found many signs of discontent with the new order of things. This discontent he would have us understand that he shared, and indulged his feelings by absenting himself from his duties at the Library of the Palais Royal, despite the remonstrances of Oudard and other friends, who begged him to return. His attitude at this time—or what he conceived it to have been when he wrote his recollections many years later—strikes us as rather absurd, though he is not the first or the last man of letters who has invited ridicule by fancying himself a man of politics. There must be a flaw somewhere in every one's sense of humour—even in Dumas'; or else surely he would have spared the public all those superfluous pages in which, with much pomp and circumstance, he explains his political position and the reasons of

his hostility to Louis Philippe. If we leave aside his desire to purge himself of the charge of ingratitude towards his former patron—a charge not seriously sustainable considering the relative positions of the two men—and if we interpret his words and actions by the ordinary laws of human nature, we can understand things pretty well without supposing all that vanity and meanness which his detractors have been so forward to presume. The simple fact was that Dumas, after his share in the July fighting and his exploit at Soissons, thought himself to be something of a personage in politics: like all the young Romanticists he magnified the office of the "poet" as one commissioned to set to rights monarchs, governments, and the world in general. To the King, on the contrary, Dumas was only an amusing but rather troublesome young man suffering from a severe attack of that common malady—*tête montée*. This view, tolerant as it was and all the more because of its tolerance, deeply wounded our friend's self-esteem; and his resentment growing with time not only baffled his efforts to draw the distinction (which he always professed to make) between Louis Philippe as man and as sovereign, but also tempted him occasionally to putting things down which can only be considered as lapses of good taste, considering that they were written after the King had exchanged his throne for exile.

Apart from this personal side of the case, there is no reason to impugn the sincerity of Dumas' statements when he says that the conduct of the Duc d'Orléans during and just after the Revolution of July—all that business of hand-shaking, tricolour-waving, Marseillaise-singing—had moved him to contempt: the contempt was common to most people. This being so, Dumas had no claim to special recognition by the new King, who was well aware that men had not fought with

the object of exalting him to a royalty which came upon the majority as an unforeseen and unwelcome accident. Least of all did Louis Philippe approve of those members of the revolutionary party, like his former clerk, whose zeal for Republicanism had taken an extreme and conspicuous form.

It was therefore with feelings already ruffled that Dumas received the summons to wait upon the King. Of this interview we have of course no other account than his own. "The King received me, *whether by chance or by design* (the words are worth underlining as an ingenuous revelation of self-importance) in the same room in which, as Duc d'Orléans, he had received me just before the production of *Henri III.*"

The conversation turned on Dumas' recent visit to La Vendée; and he repeated the views already expressed in his written report, declaring that the establishment of a National Guard in that country would be both impossible and dangerous—impossible because the middle class had its own business affairs to attend to and would grudge the time for drill and training, dangerous because the uniform would at once kindle between those who wore it and those who did not, a quarrel out of which, he hinted, a Bourbon movement instigated by the Duchesse de Berry might very likely arise.

The King did not consider that La Vendée was a source of danger: Chouannerie in his opinion was dead. Dumas bowed, and begged leave respectfully to differ. Then, being invited to express himself freely, he remarked that the condition of La Vendée offered an excellent reason for not undertaking at this moment that aggressive foreign policy which with many Frenchmen would have been popular.

"The King bit his lips: I had evidently made a good shot.

" ' Politics, M. Dumas,' he said, ' you had better leave to Kings and Ministers. You are a poet; stick to your poetry.'

" ' You mean, Sire ? '

" ' I mean that as a poet you look at things from a poet's point of view.'

" ' Sire,' I replied with a bow, ' the ancients called the poet a prophet-*vates*.' "

At this point the King had had enough. With a gesture of his hand he signified that the interview was over. Under the circumstances we should almost excuse His Majesty if the gesture had been with the foot.

So Dumas withdrew, and as he passed out informed Oudard that his rupture with Louis Philippe was now complete. To signify this he enrolled himself in an artillery regiment of the National Guard which his Republican friends were organizing: at the same time he sent a letter to the King resigning his appointment as sub-librarian, which letter, whether or not it reached its destination, received no reply. In the artillery he was soon promoted to the rank of Captain in the Fourth Battery, nicknamed *La Meurtrière* because of the number of doctors it contained. This position, while it gave Dumas the infinite satisfaction of a fine new uniform, proved accidentally to be the means of making him still more obnoxious in high quarters. It was a regrettable incident, albeit ludicrous, which arose thus. On the last day of 1830 the officers of the new artillery had met together and agreed to pay a New Year's visit of *etiquette* to the King on January 1, for which purpose they were to meet at 9 a.m. in the courtyard of the Palais Royal. By ill luck Dumas slept later than usual that morning, so that having hurriedly got into his uniform he could only reach the Palais Royal a quarter of an hour behind the appointed time. Here he found officers of all

sorts waiting about in various uniforms, but none—strange to say—in that of the artillery. Imagining that his brother officers had gone on, he ascended the large staircase and entered the Grande Salle. He was too concerned about being late to notice as much as he would otherwise have done the curiosity which his appearance aroused and a sort of general anxiety to avoid him. It just floated across his mind that this might be due to a certain jealousy of the newly-formed corps, and this thought only made him hold his head higher as he advanced to the Royal presence. What then was his astonishment to notice that the King also was staring at him with strange intensity, while those who surrounded the King wore a look of horror and consternation! As he passed before Louis Philippe His Majesty greeted him with "Good-day, Dumas, this is you all over!" (*je vous reconnais bien-là*), and laughed out aloud, the courtiers as in duty bound following suit. "I had not the remotest idea," says Dumas, "what they were laughing at; but, that I might be in the swim, I smiled also." Having passed on into the next room he there found his colleagues who had preceded him—not one of them in uniform. Then only was the mystery explained. A Royal decree issued on the evening before had been published that morning in the *Moniteur*, disbanding the artillery regiment of the National Guard! Dumas had not seen it. He seldom read the *Moniteur*, and the fact of his being late that morning had prevented his friends from calling his attention to it. He was horrified and vexed beyond measure when he obtained the paper and read the notice, all the more so because his brother officers, whom he implored to make every kind of apology to the King, would persist in believing that he had done it on purpose. "In that case," says he, "I should have been guilty of an unpardonable impertinence, less excusable in

me than in any one else : the simple truth was that it was an act of sheer ignorance." We may well believe it, and the only moral to be drawn is that you should be careful, especially in stirring times, to get up early in the morning and read the paper.

The episode, however, had this unfortunate effect—that, being bruited abroad all over Paris, it gave Dumas a marked position among the malcontents and identified him with the Opposition more, doubtless, than he desired. Hence his relations with the Court became more awkward than ever ; and when six weeks later he saw the *fleurs de lis* being obliterated from the Royal carriages—apparently as a concession to the popular disturbances then agitating Paris—his disgust at this paltry abolition of what seemed to him, Republican as he was, to be a symbol of the past glories of France no less than the badge of her kings, led him to again send in his resignation, which he did in a letter dated February 15, 1831. The most notable feature of this letter was the announcement that in his case " the literary man was only a preface to the politician," and that the day was fast approaching when he would take his seat in the Chamber of Deputies—a singularly unfortunate prophecy, and one which Dumas must often have wished to be among things unsaid. This time his resignation was accepted, and he ceased definitely to have any official connexion with the Orleans household.

Succeeding events tended to estrange him still further. There was, for example, the unpleasantness about the July Cross and the Government's proposal to inscribe this decoration as " given by the King of the French," to which the popular party objected on the ground that it was given by the nation. Dumas' name was among those to whom this honour was awarded, but he, like the majority of the *décorés*, repudiated the inscription, and served as one of a committee

of fourteen elected to protest against this illegality. The Government modified their original intention, but the whole affair was mismanaged into becoming a cause of discontent instead of a mark of distinction. And so on through the first few years of Louis Philippe's reign, which were filled by a succession of small crises. Between Legitimists and Republicans it was difficult to steer, and the policy of the *juste milieu* seemed to stand for discontent at home and isolation abroad. Republicans were already looking back to the glories of the Empire and reflecting that Napoleon after all had been the child of a Republic. This feeling came at last to the point of serious bloodshed, on the occasion (June 5, 1832) of General Lamarque's funeral. As a friend of the Lamarque family—the old General had known his father—Dumas was deputed by them to take charge of the artillery escort furnished by the National Guard, in which now reconstituted force he was a lieutenant. Riding along through the streets and close to the coffin he was a conspicuous object, and exerted himself to allay the excitement of the populace.[1] In the actual fray, when things had come to that pass, he seems to have taken little part, both because he was unarmed and because he was ill and weak from the effects of a recent attack of cholera. He did one thing, however, which laid him open to serious charge. Whether to rest himself and get a quiet view of what was going on, or on the chance of procuring weapons of some sort, he went into the Porte Saint Martin Theatre. While he was there a body of rioters came up, loudly demanding muskets, of which they knew that the theatre had a good stock among its properties. To

[1] The reckless devilry of these scenes is illustrated by Dumas' statement that he heard some young students of the Polytechnique shouting out—"Let's fling La Fayette into the river, and tell the people that he has been drowned by order of Louis Philippe!"

pacify them and to save the theatre from being sacked, Dumas, after making a little speech, brought out and distributed twenty stage muskets, first stipulating that these should be regarded as a loan and returned when done with. This was perhaps the best course to take at the moment, but it was liable to be construed by unfriendly authorities as supplying the insurgents with arms; and it was so construed. Additional notoriety was given to his name by the news published in a Legitimist paper of June 9 that "M. Alexandre Dumas had been taken in the street fighting, tried by court martial, and shot at 3 a.m. We deeply deplore (the paper added) this untimely death of a young and talented author." On which Dumas says: "The details were so circumstantial that for an instant I doubted my own existence, and I felt myself to see if I was really there. I was convinced that the editor believed in my death, as it was the first time his paper had found anything good to say of me. So I forwarded him my card, with best thanks." Just then a characteristic note arrived from Nodier:

"DEAR ALEXANDRE,—I read in the paper that you were shot on June 6. Be good enough to let me know if this will prevent you from dining here to-morrow with Dauzats, Taylor, Bixio, and our usual friends.—Yours very sincerely, CHARLES NODIER.

"P.S.—I shall be delighted to have the opportunity of asking you for news of the other world."

The issue of all this was that Dumas—whose name (as he afterwards found out) had already been noted down in the report of a Government agent as that of a *republican in the full sense of the word*—received a message brought by an aide-de-camp of the King to the effect that his arrest had

been under serious consideration, and that he had better go abroad for a month or two, by which time everything would have blown over. As this hint from the King—friendly enough it seems to us—coincided with the advice of his doctor, he at once made ready to start for a tour in Switzerland. Thus for a time ended our friend's participation in politics. It is easy enough to criticize him from the vantage-ground of secure indifference: we do better to remember how hard it was, in those "incandescent" days, to avoid such entanglements (witness, for example, all the ridiculous turmoil raised in 1833 about the interesting condition of the Duchesse de Berry), and to admit that, if Dumas sometimes made a fool of himself, he did so in a numerous and not undistinguished company.



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A CARICATURE BY NADAR.

CHAPTER VI

L'HOMME DE THÉÂTRE

(1831–1843)

IN following the political free-lance we have, for the sake of grouping, outstepped a little the strict order of dates. After *Henri III* and *Christine*, and before the events of 1830, Dumas had written his famous *Antony*; but this play, like Hugo's *Marion Delorme*, being prohibited by Charles X's government, lay under the Censor's ban at the time when the Revolution broke out. It was in the midst of the July riots that Harel, at the suggestion of Mademoiselle Georges, came to Dumas with the idea of a drama on Napoleon, which in the then state of public feeling the astute manager of the Odéon deemed likely to draw. At first the dramatist declined the proposal, partly because Bonaparte's treatment of his father and mother still rankled in his memory, chiefly because he was too engrossed just then in politics to think of anything else. So for the moment the matter dropped. Later in the year, when he had returned from La Vendée, on the evening after his interview with the King on that subject, Dumas attended a *première* at the Odéon and then went to supper at Harel's house, where he met Mademoiselle Georges, Lockroy, and Jules Janin. This supper was in the nature of a plot, recalling on a larger scale the circumstances under which Sheridan finished *The Critic*. For when, in the early hours of the morning, the others had departed and

Dumas was about to do likewise, Harel said, "Wait a minute; I want to show you something," and took him to a comfortable bed-sitting-room—easy chairs, books, pens, etc.—with a dressing-room adjoining.

"Very nice," said Dumas, "delightful place to work in, I should think."

"Glad you think so," replied his host; "you remember that Napoleon play we talked about some while ago: well, I have got you now, and I mean to have the play. This room will be your prison until you have finished it. If you want authorities on the subject, here they are!" and he pointed to Bourrienne and other standard works which he had provided. It remained only to send to Dumas' house for a few articles of toilette, and to propitiate Mélanie with a bracelet: these things the thoughtful Harel had foreseen. After some playful expostulation Dumas gave in, and at once setting himself to work invented the character of the spy, which (says he) is the only thing of literary value in the piece, this spy being a heroic creature who does the opposite of what is expected from him, faithful to Napoleon, whom he desires to save, accompanying him first to Elba, then to Saint Helena, and finally being hung by order of Sir Hudson Lowe. The rest of the play was merely a matter of *coups de ciseaux*—slices of history cut out from the career between Toulon and Saint Helena and strung together in acts and tableaux. It was written of course in hot haste, each scene as completed being handed to Georges, who passed it on to Harel; in a week the whole was finished—an immense drama of such inordinate length that much of it had to be cut at rehearsals. The number of "speaking parts" alone was upwards of eighty, and the title rôle contained four thousand lines. "I would rather," said the author, "have staged the world of Genesis than the world of *Napoléon*."

Harel, however, did the thing handsomely, expending on its production £4,000—a large sum in those days. *Napoléon Bonaparte* was brought out at the Odéon on January 10, 1831, and obtained—in common with another Napoleon play running at the same time—that fair amount of success which a *piéce de circonstance* is likely to have. Dumas himself set no store by it. "The honours of the evening," he admits, "belonged to Frédérick, who played Napoleon, rather than to me. The actor also who impersonated Sir Hudson Lowe was the 'brutal gaoler' so thoroughly that he had to be escorted from the theatre to save him from being stoned by the populace." *Napoléon*, however, deserves notice as the first specimen of the *drame roman*—a vein which was afterwards worked copiously in dramatizing the popular novels: it was also, in its way, a political manifesto designed to point the past glories of France as a contrast to the dynasty she had now accepted.

On returning home after his incarceration Dumas found a letter from the Théâtre Français, where *Antony* had been accepted, informing him that, as the Censorship was for the time in abeyance, they were about to put the play into rehearsal. Mars was to play "Adèle," Firmin "Antony." But before long it became evident to the author that neither of the two principals cared for their parts: they were constantly complaining—Mars especially—wanting to tone down now this, now that, and eventually proposing to cut out altogether the second and fourth acts. Dumas became sick of the whole thing, and began to doubt whether after all *Antony* was worth anything. Meanwhile Hugo, who understood the position at the Français, had spoken to Crosnier, the manager of the Porte Saint Martin, and induced him to make an offer for the play. Fortified by this assurance our dramatist was able to adopt a high tone to the Français

people, and directly an opportunity was offered him by their proposal to postpone the production for three months, he took back his MS., and bidding farewell to Mars and Firmin informed them that *Antony* would be played not at the Français but at the Porte Saint Martin. He knew an actress —Madame Dorval—who would appreciate and do justice to the rôle of Adèle, and to her he went at once with his play. She was entranced, exuberantly tearful: she complained only of the fifth act as too cold. He replied that he had modified this act in deference to Mademoiselle Mars, but was quite prepared now to re-write it in its original form. No sooner said than done. Dorval's husband being away, Dumas was installed in his study, and there worked from 11.30 p.m. to 3 a.m., by which time Act v was reconstructed. On the vital question of who should play *Antony*, Dorval insisted that Bocage was the man for the part; he alone had the facial qualities necessary for the gloomy misanthropic hero. Bocage came, heard, and was fascinated; nor was any time lost in reading the play to Crosnier. The manager, who had agreed to pay down 1,000 francs in advance on the day of reading, was apparently not much impressed, since (according to Dumas) "in the third act he became drowsy, during the fourth he struggled desperately to keep awake, and when the fifth was reached he was sound asleep." Moreover, as time was not of the essence of the contract, he decided not to risk his winter season with such an uncertainty, but to put off its production for three or four months. Thus it happened that *Antony*, though arranged for at the end of 1830, was not performed until May 3, 1831. Bocage and Dorval made great hits in their respective parts. Dumas himself, while struggling through the crowd at the close of the play in order to get round to the back and congratulate the actors, was so pushed and squeezed that he left behind

him various shreds of clothing to serve as relics for his admirers. From start to finish everything had gone with a rush : the spectators had literally no time to collect their thoughts, for before the effect of one sensational " curtain " had worn off the curtain was up again and the next act was begun. Hence a growing excitement of the audience, culminating in a kind of frenzy at the celebrated *dénoûment* when Adèle's husband breaks in the door and seeing his wife dead turns for explanation to Antony, who says coldly and proudly, " Elle me résistait, je l'ai assassinée ! "

The success of the play was great—more than Dumas had dared to hope for, and far more than any of his friends, except De Vigny, had anticipated ; it ran for a hundred and thirty nights at a time when the political agitation of Paris was damaging the interests of all theatres.

Anecdotes on *Antony* abound. The best known is that connected with a certain benefit performance, two or three years later, at the Palais Royal theatre. Audiences by that time knew the play, and looking forward to the *denoûment* always kept their seats to the last. On this occasion the stage manager by a strange mistake rang the curtain down on the stab which kills Adèle d'Hervey, and the spectators, angry at being deprived of the proper ending, shouted for the curtain to go up again. Dorval remained on the sofa where she had sunk dead, but no efforts could induce Bocage, furious at the mistake which had robbed him of his finest " effect," to reappear. The clamours increased, and the curtain was raised in the hope that Bocage might relent and come on. Not at all ; and so poor Madame Dorval was left alone in face of the audience. Then an inspiration came to her. Rising from her corpse-posture she advanced to the footlights, and amid complete silence said, " Gentlemen, I resisted him ; he murdered me ! " This

happy variant delighted the audience, and every one went home in high good humour.

The *dénoûment* of *Antony* was for a long time the best known in French drama. It was familiar to "the man in the street," who, though he might never have seen or read the play, would say at once if you mentioned *Antony*, "Oh, yes, 'Elle me résistait, je l'ai assassinée!'" Naturally, too, the opportunity which it offers has been coveted by all actors who have had a chance of playing the part.[1]

But behind incidents, trivial or amusing, connected with the performance of *Antony* looms that array of grave questions which the play itself evoked. "Immoral" and "scandalous" the papers, or most of them, called it, as being a rhapsody of crime—adultery throughout and murder at the end to shield adultery from its social consequences. Dumas defended himself, warmly but ineffectively. His references to standard dramas—from classical times downwards—in which similar crime is presented are not much to the point: it is not the subject but the treatment of it which is in question. The ending of *Antony* is (as the author himself says) the vital thing about the play, and that ending is surrounded with a halo of false martyrdom; for the woman because she prefers death not to dishonour but to detection,

[1] One exception, however, may be found in the case of a certain *jeune premier* of the provinces. This Don Juan of the footlights, proud of his fascinations, thought the words as they stood a serious blemish to the rôle; he could not bring himself to pretend that the woman had resisted him, and he contended that the statement was untrue because Adèle had not resisted Antony. In vain did his friends point out that in speaking the words he was merely satisfying the requirements of the author and of the drama. He was not to be convinced. Imagine then the feelings of the audience when the long-expected speech was delivered with this remarkable emendation: "Elle me résistait—*cette fois*—je l'ai assassinée."[2] (This story comes from a *Figaro* notice of a revival of *Antony*, in April, 1884; whether founded or unfounded it is too good to be lost.)

for her lover because he stands *splendide mendax*, a victim who has forfeited life to gratify passion. Nor can *Antony* be defended on the ground that it is merely non-moral rather than immoral; for the hero's passion is accompanied throughout by violent denunciations of the accepted moral code; when not engaged in adoring or threatening Adèle he is occupied in cursing society and invoking the devil—whom, by the way, he does not believe in. The reason of all this and the excuse we are meant to accept is that Antony suffers from the ban of illegitimacy which has embittered his life and made him, though wealthy and independent, the sworn foe of his fellow men. The cause seems too slight for the effect: it is the mouse producing the mountain. There exists, however, one mitigation—and that no small one—which modern opinion will generally accept: the immorality of *Antony* is redeemed by its absurdity. We cannot of course gauge the possible influence of such a play at that time on unfixed or hysterical natures—an influence perhaps as harmful as that of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*—but we feel quite certain that, in our own day and for the mass of our playgoers, the spectacle of that long-haired monomaniac raving about with his " maledictions ! " and " damnations ! " would move neither abhorrence nor sympathy, but simply laughter. The point needs not to be laboured, for no one —unless by way of paradox—has discovered an ethical tone in *Antony*.[1] Otherwise, as a masterpiece of construction, this play is not inferior to *Henri III.* Both are primarily dramas of passion: both exhibit in the highest degree the stage possibilities of passion when treated by a master hand. The only difference is that the one has an historical setting, the other a modern. So much being agreed, there remain

[1] See however J. J. Weiss, *Le Théâtre et les Moeurs*, where he speaks of *Antony* as " clothing itself at last in morality."

the various trains of reflection and analysis which this remarkable drama has suggested. What, for example, is the social significance of *Antony*? He is a descendant of Figaro, who has come out on this side of the Revolution, and proclaims—nay, shouts aloud—the rights of the individual against society, until he becomes a type of supreme egoism. Then again, in what sense is *Antony* a modern play? The man himself is a problem (as Madame de Camps in the play says, "Do invite M. Antony; he is a problem, and I love problems"): moreover his words and deeds raise questions on paternal and sexual relations which are now for the first time treated from a social instead of a moral standpoint. In this way *Antony* has founded a school. Not to speak for the moment of "Antonyism" in other works of Dumas himself, countless affinities may be traced between the hero and heroine of this play and the men and women of the Realistic social drama as developed by his son and others.[1] And the troubles of Adèle, which after all are more important than the ravings of Antony—her despair, dishonour, death—prefigure the coming invasion of the woman element in all those "problem" plays where the more the problem varies the more it remains the same.

Finally there is this question, more proper to the study of Dumas than any of those others: What disposition or mood of the author does *Antony* reveal? The character in the play, though reminiscent both of *Hamlet* and of *Fiesco*, is chiefly a blend of *Werther*, *Lara*, and *Childe Harold*: the influence of Goethe and Byron predominates, and especially that of Byron. Just as *Henri III* was inspired mainly by Scott and Schiller, so *Antony* is essentially Byronic. The

[1] It is impossible here to touch this vast subject except allusively: The most elaborate and ingenious treatment of it may be found in M. Hippolyte Parigot's book, *Le Drame d'Alexandre Dumas*.

cult of Byron—or what young France conceived as such—was very fashionable just then. One of its outward forms (Dumas tells us) was the affectation of a delicate consumptive look and a pale interesting face: the inward signs were a pretended weariness of the world—without, however, a renunciation of its pleasures—a bitter pessimism and a defiance of social conventions. To all this *Antony* corresponds: we know also, on the authority of the author, that he and his friends assumed at that time both the outward and the inward tokens of their supposed Byronism, though the idea of our large and healthy Dumas posing as *poitrinaire* stretches our imagination to the utmost.

So much for the general atmosphere. The particular origin of this drama is explained thus: The character of Antony was suggested immediately by that of Didier in Hugo's *Marion Delorme*, at a private reading of which Dumas had been present; on which we need only remark, in passing, that the debt is not very great, since, apart from the common sources of each character, Dumas' hero is a far more energetic person than Hugo's. With this idea in his head, he was walking one day along the Boulevards, when he stopped suddenly and said to himself, "A man surprised by the husband of his mistress kills her, declaring that she was resisting him, and for this murder he dies on the scaffold. Thus he both saves the honour of the woman and expiates his crime." There, in a flash, was the *dénoûment* working backward from which he wrote the play in six weeks. Even so how comes it to pass, some one may say, that a writer so little introspective should have produced a play which lends itself to so much esoteric speculation? Whence this fit of subjectivity? The answer is supplied partly by Dumas himself, who says that when he wrote *Antony* he was in love with a lady of whom he was terribly jealous,

because she was in the position of Adèle: she was married to an officer of the army and resided in Paris, her husband being quartered in the country. "Read *Antony*: that will tell you what I suffered. *Antony* is not a drama, it is not a tragedy, it is not a *pièce de théâtre*: *Antony* is a scene of love, of jealousy, and of rage, in five acts. Antony was myself less the murder, Adèle was the lady less the flight."

In this spirit he adapted to his own case Byron's scornful identification of himself with Childe Harold: in this spirit he penned those wild verses which stand as the preface of the play, and for which—admitting them to be impious—he claimed pardon on the plea that they were written in one of those moments of passion "when you feel the need of crying out aloud what you suffer."

This frank confession, disclosing the personal foundation of *Antony*, takes us some way; but we are able to supplement it by some more recent discoveries. The lady in question was a Madame Mélanie W., whom Dumas met in Villenave's house during his early Paris days: she was not so very beautiful, but sentimental, delicate, and even rather "blue." This lady must not be confused with the Mélanie S. already referred to, who did not come on the scene till 1830, when the affair with the first Mélanie was over, or almost so, having lasted probably about three years (1827–1830). The nature and course of this intrigue may be gathered from certain unpublished letters,[1] in some of which the date is indicated by the postmark, while others—dateless except for the usual lovers' time-table ("midnight," "2 a.m.," etc.)—contain internal evidence sufficient to fix their time approximately. From these—the few, that is, which

[1] *Lettres inédites à Mélanie*, given in M. Parigot's book. These letters, together with the original *Antony* MS., were put into his hands by Alexandre Dumas *fils*.

remain out of a doubtless immense number—it is possible to reconstruct the state of Dumas' mind and the varying phases of his passion. The next step is to compare these letters with the original MS. of *Antony*—for there were two versions, of which the play as acted and published was the second. The comparison shows that the first *Antony* was almost a transcript of the letters to Mélanie; afterwards, as passion cooled and the dramatist superseded the lover, came the second, more deliberate version, in many points identical with the first, but with less rhapsody, more generalization, and more stage artifice.[1] *Antony*, to sum up, is a photograph of personal passion, developed in a social medium and framed in a sensational drama. The details of this *histoire intime* do not tend to edification, but the fact is instructive, both about *Antony* and about Dumas.

It only remains to add that this play, in which the "incandescent brain of volcanic youth found its idea of modern love,"[2] never commended itself to the wiser heads of responsible authority. Twice in Louis Philippe's reign, and once under the second Empire, it was prohibited: in our own time its special qualities have fallen out of fashion. The first occasion of Government interference, in 1834, deserves notice. Thiers, then Minister of the Interior, had been negotiating with Dumas and Hugo to induce them to write modern plays for the Théâtre Français, which at that time badly needed something that would "draw." Dumas, after several interviews with the Minister, agreed, on condition that his first play at the Français should be *Antony*,

[1] Occasionally something good has disappeared in the later version: e.g. in the original MS. Adèle, on receiving Antony's letter (in Act i), says, "I do not believe in the friendship which follows love; people do not build with ashes (on ne bâtit pas avec des cendres)"—a very pretty *mot*.

[2] Théophile Gautier, *Histoire du Romantisme*.

which was now being revived at the Porte Saint Martin, and that Madame Dorval should appear in her original part. Thiers assented—indeed expressed his intention of coming himself to see *Antony*—and all was going satisfactorily, when on the very day fixed for the production a sudden order was sent by the Minister to the Director of the Français prohibiting the performance. This step was generally attributed to a strong article in the *Constitutionnel* denouncing the profanation of the national theatre by a play of this sort —a view all the more natural to the *Constitutionnel* because that paper had been made fun of in the fourth act of *Antony*. To Dumas, indignant at this treatment, Thiers explained that this action was taken not because of the article, but because M. Jay, the editor of the *Constitutionnel*, who was also an influential deputy with a large following in the Chamber, had threatened that if the play were produced he and his party would vote against the Government's Budget. Thiers considered his Budget more important than his agreement with the dramatist: Dumas thought otherwise, and took the matter into court, where he was awarded £400 damages, nominally against the director of the Français but practically against the Government. The affair, being wholly one of political expediency, throws a curious light on the "moral" functions of the Censorship in France.

At this point the instinct of classification would prompt us to consider next those other "modern" dramas of Dumas for which *Antony* is the starting point. But a truer view of our author's nature—his versatile, fruitful, audacious brain—is gained by following the order of time. What was it that next took his fancy? Not another *Antony* play, but one as far removed from *Antony* as is pole from pole, nothing less than a tragedy in the grand style—the style of Corneille

and Racine—like to but greater than that first version of *Christine* which had never seen the footlights. He had agreed with Harel to write this tragedy for the Odéon, and for the sake of quiet or inspiration he went (July 1831) to Trouville, then a small fishing village unknown except to a few artists and containing one modest inn of most modest tariff. Here, with Mélanie S. as his Egeria, for six weeks he stayed, fishing a little, bathing, strolling on the beach, but giving the greater part of his time to the composition of that ambitious tragedy *Charles VII chez ses grands vassaux*, which he admits to be his " biggest sin " in the way of assimilation and imitation. It is indeed a curious *pastiche* of Goethe (*Goetz de Berlichingen*), Corneille (*Le Cid* and *Horace*), Racine (*Andromaque*), Scott (*Quentin Durward*), De Musset (*Marrons du Feu*). Moreover, according to Théophile Gautier,[1] the central idea of the play—that of a contrast between Islam and Christianity, between the Nomad tent and the Feudal castle—had been suggested to Dumas three or four years back by the unpublished *La Dame de Carouge*, written by Gérard de Nerval for the *Cénacle*, and no doubt shown by him to Dumas. The Hafiz of Nerval's drama becomes in *Charles VII* Yaqoub, who, like his prototype, is an Arab Emir brought back from Palestine by a Crusader, and becomes enamoured of the Crusader's wife. The wife Bérengère, in Dumas' play, does not love Yaqoub, but in jealousy and rage against her husband prompts the Emir to murder him promising herself as his reward. The murder is done, but when Yaqoub comes to claim his prize he stumbles against the dead body of Bérengère, who, having satisfied her vengeance, has poisoned herself. This ending recalls exactly the behaviour of Chimène in *Le Cid*, and that of Hermione in *Andromaque*, though of course neither Corneille

[1] *Histoire du Romantisme:*

nor Racine was the first inventor of the situation. In his preface Dumas speaks of *Charles VII* as "a work of style rather than a drama of action," its object being "to put on the stage types rather than men." It would be presumptuous for a foreigner to pretend judgment of a play on which so much difference of opinion exists among expert French judges. Did Dumas hamper himself too much by adopting metre and observing the three unities? Does he not appear to more advantage at those moments in the tragedy when he lets himself go—when, in fact, he forgets the "style" and attends to the "action"? Is *Charles VII* properly a tragedy, or is it not rather a "tragic drama"? Such questions are suggested by the epigraph of the preface, "Cur non?" In any case, the piece presented at the Odéon on October 20, 1831, had nothing more than a *succès d'estime*, and was soon withdrawn, though when revived many years later it fared much better.

Of interesting reminiscences belonging to its first performance one concerns an accident which nearly caused a complete fiasco. The armour worn by Delafosse—who played Charles VII—had been borrowed from a museum: it was genuinely mediaeval, and its springs and joints required much coaxing to make them work properly. The helmet especially was a difficulty, for the visor—although treatment had brought it to a condition in which the actor could *lower* it when necessary—absolutely refused to be *raised* without an operation behind the scenes. Barring accidents this would not have mattered, for in the natural course Charles VII, after making a long warlike speech, lowers his visor and goes off. Unfortunately, owing perhaps to some violent gesture of the actor, the visor suddenly fell of itself right in the middle of this speech, with the result that the words of the actor from a spirited declamation became an

indistinct mumbling. The audience, as audiences will, began to laugh. Happily Charles VII's squire, who knew the ways of the visor, rushed forward, and pressing with his poniard succeeded in a few seconds in raising it, though Delafosse was nearly choked in the process. The spectators, thinking this to be part of the play, ceased laughing, and no further hitch occurred. Hereon Dumas remarks: "With a visor like that, Henri II would not have died at the hands of Montgomery. Observe on what may hang the fate of empires—I might even say the fate of plays! Henri II was killed because his visor went up, Charles VII came near to being killed because his visor fell!"

The other *Charles VII* reminiscence is supplied by the younger Dumas in the preface of *Le Fils Naturel*, where he recalls how as a boy of eight he accompanied his father that night to the Odéon and sat beside him through the play; then how the two walked home together—the father striding along gloomy and silent contrary to his wont, so that the child could understand something had gone wrong. "I have never," says Dumas *fils*, "returned from one of my own most successful 'first nights' without thinking of that evening long ago, of that large cold theatre, and that silent walk through the lonely streets: and when my friends have been congratulating me, I have thought to myself, 'Yes, it may be as you say, but I would rather have written *Charles VII* which did *not* succeed.'" This is filial feeling, no doubt, but it is also the judgment of a high authority.

Charles VII, then, was a bitter disappointment to its author. But there were other irons in the fire, and while Dumas had been working at Trouville on his tragedy of the Middle Ages he had not forgotten *Antony* or the men of his own time whom, quite as much as those of former days, he was qualified to understand or to feel. He continued this

line in *Teresa, Richard Darlington, Angèle, Kean.* The first of these, as regards subject, may be bracketed with *Antony*, though far inferior. Again it is a question of adultery, but in this case the ending is commonplace instead of heroic. *Teresa* presents a succession of moving incidents ending in the suicide of the lady, but there is an absence throughout of any relief to gloom—any gentle thoughts or smiling faces. "One feature of the author's temperament is here apparent: he has no sense of *les nuances*, his predilection is wholly for extreme sensations."[1] *Teresa*, which recalled Delavigne's *École des Vieillards*, made no mark when produced at the Opéra Comique on February 6, 1832. Two facts, however, in connexion with it are notable. It was the first play —not counting his two early vaudevilles—which Dumas wrote in collaboration, his partner being Anicet Bourgeois, who had sketched the piece, which Dumas finished off in three weeks—chiefly to oblige Bocage, who by way of contrast with his *Antony* now wanted an "old man" part. *Teresa* was also the occasion of Dumas' introduction to Mademoiselle Ida Ferrier, who later on became his wife. This young lady, described as "short, fair, and rather plump," represented Amélie Delaunay in the play, and was so delighted with her success that, in Dorval fashion, she flung herself upon the author of her fame with protestations of eternal gratitude. What could Dumas do but take her off to supper?[2]

More important is *Richard Darlington.* One of Antony's sayings had been, "Love and ambition are passions, friendship is only a sentiment." Antony was the egoist in love, Richard is the egoist in ambition; and as the natural sphere

[1] Alphonse Royer, *Histoire du Théâtre Contemporain.*

[2] Jules Lecomte, *Lettres sur les Écrivains Français, par Van Engelgom.*

of ambition is politics, that way the hero's course lies. The prologue—taken from Scott's *Chronicles of the Canongate*—tells how Richard as a foundling was sheltered and brought up by the good Doctor Grey at Darlington. Afterwards, to gain local influence, he marries Jenny, the doctor's daughter, and becomes M.P, for Darlington, having defeated his rival at the polls, "Sir Stanson." But as this marriage does not suit his widening ambition he deserts Jenny, and having become a Minister seeks a more aristocratic and wealthy connexion. His path is now crossed by his first wife: it is necessary to get rid of her, and the crime by which this is done brings ruin to him. Richard is an unmitigated scoundrel (again there are no "shades"): on one side of him is a low intriguer called Tompson, his evil genius; on the other a mysterious figure known as Mawbray, who, hovering about behind doors and curtains, intervenes to prevent him from crime and to protect his deserted wife, and at last when Richard has flung Jenny down the precipice comes forward to reveal himself and discomfit the adventurer with these awful words, "You are my son, and I am the hangman!" This ending may appear clumsy (Dumas' fondness for *le bourreau*, conceived here as a State functionary of dark but dire importance, will be familiar to all who know *Les trois Mousquetaires*); and it is probable that English readers, either shocked at some of the brutalities of *Richard Darlington*, or diverted by some of its local absurdities, may fail in doing justice to the admirable execution of this drama, its constant movement, its dexterous use of the natural and the commonplace to bring about startling and vital developments—characteristics in which the Shakespearian studies of Dumas are more apparent than in most of his other work. *Richard Darlington* was written in partnership with Beudin and Goubaux (known

jointly as "Dinaux" in the authorship of *Trente Ans ou la Vie d'un Joueur*), the former of whom came to Dumas, then staying at Trouville, to ask his co-operation as soon as he should return to Paris. The two had already invented the prologue: for the rest of the play details exist which not only show the division of labour in this case but also illustrate the general relations of Dumas to his collaborators. Not to speak of the parts directly due to him, among which is the scene—suggested no doubt by a passage in Schiller's *Don Carlos*—where Richard tries to force Jenny to a divorce, he wrote in its final form the whole play, making alterations as he went along. His work too was the *dénoûment*, which presented more difficulty than anything. How was Jenny to be got rid of? Goubaux had proposed poisoning her. "No," said Dumas, "that will never do, for how shall we dispose of her body? And besides, the act should not be one of premeditation, but the result of a sudden burst of rage." Much better it seemed—and here he must have had in mind the fate of Amy Robsart—to make the house overlook a steep precipice, so that Richard could fling her out of the window. But how was this to be done before the audience, who would not tolerate a violent struggle or with whom a possible glimpse of the lady's legs would provoke laughter and ruin the effect? Dumas found the way out with his usual skill. Richard having bolted the door, Jenny flies naturally to the window crying "Help! help!" He follows her to the balcony, where she falls on her knees. Immediately—for the sounds of people approaching are already heard on the stairs—Richard draws together the two parts of the window, and the pair disappear by a slight movement to one side. Nothing is seen, a loud cry is heard, and Richard stands again on the balcony before the spectators alone, Jenny having disappeared into the abyss below.

The whole of this scene, however it may strike a person who merely reads the play, is well known to have been one of the most thrilling ever exhibited on the stage. At the first performance (December 10, 1831) a shudder of presentiment ran through the house when the wife said to her husband, " Qu'allez-vous faire ? " and he replied, " Je n'en sais rien, mais priez Dieu ! " And not the audience only, but the players were infected. Frédérick Lemaître, who represented Richard, was so intense in this final scene that Mademoiselle Noblet (Jenny) lost the sense of unreality and uttered a cry of genuine fear. Dumas going behind met in the corridor De Musset very pale and agitated. " What is the matter, dear poet ? " he asked. " The matter ! " replied De Musset, " I am choking ! "

Higher praise the author needed not : " Étouffant," he says, " that is really what *Richard Darlington* is." For some unexplained reason, however, he refused to take the honour of being named before the curtain, either alone or with his two partners, though by the admission of both the credit of the success was due to him.

Another side of *Richard Darlington* is presented in *Angèle* (1833), the purport of which is best indicated by the title originally proposed for it, *L'Échelle de Femmes.* Here we have Alfred d'Alvimar, like Richard a selfish adventurer, but one who seeks his end through the salon and the boudoir instead of the hustings. One step in " the ladder " is the girl Angèle, betrayed and deserted by him but loved by and loving the young doctor, Henri Muller, who attends her in her confinement. The pathos of the thing is that Muller, suffering from consumption, knows that he has only a short while to live. This fact is utilized to bring about a startling *dénoûment.* Alfred has promised to marry Angèle, but, while the girl's mother has gone for the notary, he tries to

escape: Muller confronts him and forces him to a duel. While the notary is seated, preparing the marriage contract, the report of a pistol is heard outside. "What is the name of the husband?" asks the notary; and the answer comes from Muller, who appears, and in saying "Henri Muller" adds, "and I recognize my child." Then approaching Angèle he says, "There was one man, dearest, before whom you would have had to blush: I have killed that man." "You forget, Henri, there is another." "Ah! but he has so short a time to live!" (Curtain.)

To these three "sequels" of *Antony*, *Kean* (1836)—though three years later—may properly be added. Egoism is again the keynote—this time the magnetic and vehement personality of the artist. Kean, the famous actor, drawn as a French rather than an English character, is shown to us studying human passions on himself in order to represent them the better. He forms a link between social extremes, now drinking with his old friends at the "Coal Hole" tavern—Peter Patt, John Cooks "le boxeur," Pistol, Bardolph, Ketty la Blonde, etc.; now again among the aristocracy, defying Lord Mewil, winning the hearts of gentle ladies, making love to the Comtesse de Koeffeld, insulting the Prince of Wales from the stage of Drury Lane, finally being arrested by "le constable" and sent into temporary exile. *Disorder and Genius* is the sub-title of the play, and conveys no bad impression of it.

In describing *Antony* and its four affiliations we have dealt with that portion of Dumas' work for the theatre in which his influence on subsequent dramatists has probably been most extensive. To illustrate this at length would take us too far:[1] let it be enough to say that both the spirit of

[1] M. Parigot develops the subject at large, comparing with *Antony* the various "men of genius" we find in *Les Effrontés*,

these plays and the situations they involve can be traced again and again on the stage of the next generation. How many upstarts and adventurers, clever and unscrupulous —whether their sphere be society, or politics, or finance— do we not know in the drama of the next fifty years—the drama let us say (to take the most distinguished names) of Dumas *fils* and Émile Augier! It is true that these later creations have more satire about them and less declamation, that their violence has been exchanged for craft and their fiery defiance for cool cynicism; but their characters are fundamentally the same. No longer now does any one regard the so-called Romantic and Realist schools as wholly the reversal and contradiction of each other: we recognize the two as overlapping phases in the development of the modern drama; and the elder Dumas, Romantic as he was, might with some truth be called the first of the Realists. There is no need to speak of his inventiveness—his stage-craft in every form: that quality belongs to all his plays, and on that score the debt of his successors is still running, and not in France alone. It is well, however, to bear these things in mind, because the prominence given to the "borrowings" of Dumas has sometimes obscured the wholesale extent to which others are under obligation to him.

At this period our author's special connexion was with the Porte Saint Martin theatre, now under the management of Harel, who had moved there from the Odéon. To the "Porte Saint Martin drama" we may add as the contribu-

Le Fils de Giboyer, Le Fils naturel, La Question d'Argent, etc. To *Richard Darlington* he finds resemblances in Augier's *Le Gendre de M. Poirier,* in Daudet's *La Lutte pour la Vie,* in Jules Lemaître's *Le Député Leveau.* From *Angèle* he traces the modern woman as she appears in Scribe's *Une Chaine,* and in the *Denise* of Dumas *fils*; while *M. Alphonse* appears to be the modern lover descended from d'Alvimar. In *Kean* the character of Ketty is a prototype of that of Marcelle in *Le Demi-monde*; and so on infinitely.

tions of Dumas four other plays, putting them in their order of success. There was *Le Fils de l'Émigré* (1832), hastily made up with Anicet Bourgeois, which was a downright failure: the accumulation of horrors it contained was too much for the feelings of the audience, and was condemned by every newspaper in Paris. Then there was that marvellous *Catherine Howard* (1834), described by its author as an "extra-historic" drama, for which he fancied that *King Lear* and *Cymbeline* supplied precedents—though the exercise of poetic fancy upon purely mythical personages as those of Shakespeare seems very different from playing fast and loose with well known historical characters. But Dumas had "all the audacities," and more: it probably never occurred to him that his "historic" dramas did not contain such a superfluity of history as to leave room for an "extra-historic" species. Observe, then, *Catherine Howard*, in which (says the preface) "I merely used Henry VIII as a nail whereon to hang my picture." In fact the original idea of the play had nothing to do with the fifth wife of uxorious Henry, but was suggested by Horace Vernet's picture of Edith searching for the body of Harold after the battle of Hastings. On this subject, *Edith aux longs cheveux*, Dumas made a play to which neither the Français nor Harel would have anything to say: two years later *Edith* appears as *Catherine Howard*, and strange things happen "extra-historically." Catherine's husband uses, *à la* Romeo, a narcotic to save his wife from Henry VIII by making her pass for dead. The King, thinking her dead, still proclaims her his bride, and passes his ring on to her finger. But the lady on waking up finds herself desirous of reigning, and gladly accepts the proffered crown, whereupon the husband employs the narcotic on his own person to save himself from the King's vengeance. The drama ends with the

execution of Catherine at the hands of her husband, who, masked, fulfils the functions of our old friend *le bourreau*.

From the extra-historic we pass to the purely fantastic in *Don Juan de Marana* (1836), a "mystery" somewhat in the fashion of Calderon. This singular mixture of things sacred and profane—in which good and bad spirits contend for the soul of Don Juan, and the scene is laid sometimes in heaven, sometimes on earth, and once again in a place still lower—will be chiefly familiar with us through the pungent criticism devoted to it by Thackeray.[1] Against the view which objects to such a play on religious grounds nothing can be said. To introduce sacred scenes and figures on the stage without giving offence requires either great simplicity or peculiar delicacy, and in this respect *Don Juan* is hardly successful. Otherwise the subject was common to all the world, and there was no reason why Dumas should not try his hand at it, especially as it was rather to the front just at this time. What immediately suggested it was no doubt Prosper Mérimée's story, *Les Âmes du Purgatoire*, which was published in 1834 and set forth those parts of the legend peculiar to the Don Juan of Marana as distinct from him of Tenorio. From this centre-piece was constituted an astounding mosaic with bits from Molière, Shakespeare, Goethe, Hoffmann, Musset, so curiously wrought that the critic of the *Journal des Débats* was able to draw an amusing picture of these authors, one after the other appearing in phantom form, like the ghosts in *Richard III*, to reproach Dumas with what he had taken from each of them. Neither of these two last-named plays achieved much success compared to that most striking of all Porte Saint Martin dramas, the famous *Tour de Nesle* which—with Georges as the Queen

[1] Essay on French Dramas and Melodramas in the *Paris Sketch Book*.

and Bocage as Buridan—began in 1832 its unprecedented course of eight hundred nearly consecutive performances. The controversy about its authorship can hardly be here ignored, though to compress it satisfactorily would tax the powers of the most skilful writer of précis. A young and almost unknown author, Frédéric Gaillardet, had submitted to Harel a drama on the subject of Margaret of Burgundy —the first wife of Louis X—and the orgies held by that demoralized Queen and her two sisters in the Tour de Nesle, where they entertained their lovers and then had them murdered and thrown into the Seine. Harel, having examined Gaillardet's MS., saw that it contained a good idea, but being written without knowledge of the stage was in its present form unplayable. He therefore handed it, with Gaillardet's consent, to Jules Janin for the purpose of investing it with " scenic style " ; and an agreement was made in due form by which the play was to be considered the joint work of Gaillardet and Janin and to be produced under their joint names. Janin having rewritten the original MS. with much verbal improvement, but—except for the " *tirade des grandes dames* "—no substantial alteration, retired from the business despairing of a satisfactory result, and renounced his partnership. Thereupon Harel, assuming that it could not matter to Gaillardet whether he had one partner or another, invoked the assistance of Dumas, who took Janin's version in hand on the stipulation that he should remain in the background, neither being considered a partner nor being named, but having a separate agreement with Harel for remuneration at the rate of ten per cent. on the receipts—an arrangement which in the theatrical depression then existing by reason of the cholera epidemic—did not promise to be very lucrative. This settled, Dumas set to work on Janin's version of *La Tour de Nesle*, which was practically the same

as Gaillardet's original MS., and reconstructed the play as we know it. Meanwhile Gaillardet, who was in the country, having picked up several hints from Janin and Harel, and indirectly no doubt from Dumas himself through Harel, was on his side making another version which under the circumstances was likely to bear no remote resemblance to the play now being written by Dumas in Paris. Before, however, this second version was finished he was informed that "his play" was in rehearsal, by which he understood that the Porte Saint Martin was about to produce Dumas' version of the original. Indignantly he posted to Paris and tried to stop the rehearsals; but in vain, for Harel coolly told him that, if he carried his objections further, the piece should be produced under a different title. So Gaillardet consented perforce to the collaboration imposed upon him, and made an agreement with Dumas by which either of them was to be free to include the drama among his published works, but it was to be described on the bill as by "F. Gaillardet et XXX." Accordingly on the first night (May 29, 1832) the young author alone was named and received all the applause, though Dumas—who took Odilon Barrot and his wife to see the play—allowed his own share in it to become a very open secret. Next day, foreseeing a good run and seizing the opportunity of an advertisement which would stimulate public curiosity, Harel deliberately altered the wording of the play-bill into "MM. XXX et F. Gaillardet," inverting the order of the names and proceeding, as Dumas says, from the unknown to the known in defiance of algebraical principles, or any other. For the manager's conduct was inexcusable,[1] and Dumas was genuinely annoyed

[1] Harel was desperately anxious to ignore the cholera fiend. One of his advertisements ran thus: "It has been observed with astonishment that theatres are the only public places in which no

at the complication thus involved. Gaillardet at once wrote to the papers to protest against the alteration : Harel replied declaring that nineteen-twentieths of the play was by a celebrated author who wished to remain unknown. He was then compelled by legal means to restore the bill to its original form, but he had attained his object—scandal and notoriety. A further letter followed from Gaillardet, quoting a communication he had received from Dumas, which referred to the *Tour de Nesle* as "*your* drama." At this point, Dumas, hitherto quiet, intervened, stung by what he deemed the other's ingratitude in appropriating the sole credit and by his attempt to arrange the publication of the play as his own. Rather hotly he commented on Gaillardet's use of his letter, and asserted that he had written *La Tour de Nesle* without even having seen Gaillardet's version. Henceforth it was open war between the two : the case was taken to the courts, and the drama was adjudged on technical grounds to be the work of Gaillardet. Here the matter rested until two years later, when "the young man"—as Dumas persisted in calling him, much to his annoyance—revived it by a newspaper article giving some account of "the Tower," and how he had been inspired to write a play on it. In so doing of course he assumed to himself the authorship, and invited a reply, which became a lengthy recapitulation of the facts. Harsh things were said on both sides, and ultimately Dumas challenged Gaillardet to a duel,

case of cholera has appeared. We commend this indisputable fact to the investigation of science."

The bad state of theatrical business is illustrated by a story that the Odéon performed one night to a single spectator who refused to take his money back and insisted on seeing the play through. Not only so, but he actually hissed it. Thereby he turned the tables in favour of the manager, who summoned a police officer and had him ejected for "interrupting the performance!"

which was fought with pistols in the Bois de Vincennes (October 17, 1834), happily without bloodshed, as, after each party had fired and missed, the seconds, who were friends of both, stopped the combat. The last word on the affair —and for practical purposes the decisive word—was that of Gaillardet, when, in 1861, on the revival of the play, he wrote to the then manager of the Porte Saint Martin as follows: "A judgment of the court in 1832 ordered that *La Tour de Nesle* should be printed and advertised in my name alone, as was done until its prohibition in 1851. Now that you are reviving it, I permit you, and even beg you, to join to my name that of Alexandre Dumas, my collaborator, to whom I wish to prove that I have forgotten our old quarrel, and remember only our recent good relations as well as the great share which his incomparable talent had in the success of the play. Paris, April 25, 1861." The last sentence is a confession, generous it may be, but also no more than just. The whole intricate case resolves itself into three aspects. First, and least interesting, is the legal decision assigning the authorship to Gaillardet: that depended on technical points of little outside consequence. Then comes the ethical question of right or wrong. Here —however natural the inclination to sympathize with a young author pluckily asserting his rights—there are certain points that diminish this feeling. Gaillardet said in his wrath that he wanted no collaboration at all, nor had he ever understood that Janin's help was to be considered as such. Yet the explicit agreement was there in black and white, and we can hardly suppose that even "the young man" was so unsophisticated as not to be aware of its meaning. Again, Gaillardet harps on the injustice of referring to his *original* MS., contending that fresh ideas had come to him, by the light of which he was remodelling the

play. But these " fresh ideas " were—as pointed out above —the ideas of Janin, Harel, and Dumas, and it is precisely by the original MS. that the amount of Gaillardet's authorship must be measured. This document was doubtless destroyed by him—at any rate it was not forthcoming. A contemporary writer,[1] however, not pledged to either side, declares that he saw two MSS., " that of Gaillardet, which was an ill-arranged medley (*fatras indigeste*), and that of one of our most skilful critics (i.e. Janin), who had spent much time in clarifying it. From this latter Dumas took only two situations—the orgy in the Tower and the scene of the gipsy soothsayer at the Court of Marguerite. Of the nine tableaux in the play these two alone can Gaillardet claim, and even here Dumas has done some arrangement. The original contained no suggestion of the arrest of Buridan at the gate of the Louvre, and the fine prison scene between Marguerite and Buridan, or the terrible ending when the two—father and mother, as they find themselves—are present at Gaultier's death unable to prevent it, and recognizing their son only when he lies a corpse." Add to this testimony the still greater weight of internal evidence which has made it impossible for any student of Dumas to doubt that he was justified in claiming the real authorship of *La Tour de Nesle.* In fact, neither he nor Gaillardet deserves most blame: the chief sinner was clearly the unscrupulous Harel, who set himself, for trade purposes, to make a scandal, and succeeded finely. As for Dumas, if he erred in lack of self-restraint, his error is outbalanced by an arrogance on the part of Gaillardet only intelligible on the supposition that he was profoundly ignorant of what constitutes authorship.

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes,* January 1834. " Poètes et Romanciers Modernes—Alexandre Dumas," by H. Romand.

This brings us to the literary aspect of the case, which amounts to the question—Is the author of a play the man who furnishes an idea, or the man who executes the idea? The question can admit of only one answer—that which the younger Dumas gave in discussing the point. Dramatic ideas are a form of property too common to entitle their owner to the credit of authorship: all depends on the treatment—the way in which the ideas are handled so as to fit them for stage presentation. We may credit Gaillardet with the first thought about *La Tour de Nesle*—though indeed it was not peculiar to him, for the subject and the personage of Buridan had been treated in Roger de Beauvoir's novel, *L'Écolier de Cluny*, published a few weeks before the first performance of the drama: we may concede to Gaillardet one idea or half a dozen, but the fact remains that these might never have been presented on the stage at all, and would certainly never have been presented in the shape which so marvellously seized the public fancy, had they not been dressed by a master-hand—the same hand which had made *Henri III* and *Antony*. And who shall say how many modifications and improvements were introduced in the process of dressing?

Were this an ordinary play its authorship had caused no concern. But *La Tour de Nesle* embodies all the characteristics of moving melodrama, together with some historical interest and no slight touch of tragic horror—the horror of Sophocles. For dramatic skill universal praise has been given to the scene where Buridan—an adventurer not unlike Antony and Richard Darlington, and with many features of the future D'Artagnan—finding himself a prisoner in desperate case, turns the tables on the Queen, who comes to gloat over his doom; step by step recalling the past with cool assurance, he compels Margaret to un-

loose his bonds one by one[1] until he stands beside her free, and offering her his arm with insolent triumph, says, "And now we will go to meet King Louis X, who returns to-morrow to his good town of Paris." But above Buridan, clever as he is, hovers Fate, whose unseen working brings about the catastrophe of the final scene. The snares which the Queen and Buridan lay each for the other culminate in a discovery as awful as that of Œdipus, and in the unwitting contrivance by the two of death for the man whom at the fatal moment they know to be their son. Never has melodrama bordered so close on tragedy. Never has play been written with a more telling unity than that given by the sombre Tower itself, the centre of all action, impending always, ever on the lips of speakers, symbolizing the lust and cruelty of rulers, and suggesting also perhaps to a French audience that other tower—the fortress of despotism—which their fathers had demolished.

But just as Dumas had stepped from *Antony* to *Charles VII*, so by a no less abrupt transition *La Tour de Nesle* had followed close on a very different piece, and one which first indicated his power in the direction of light comedy—*Le Mari de la Veuve*, manufactured in a couple of days to oblige Mademoiselle Dupont, who wanted something new for her benefit performance at the Comédie Française. This little comedy—according to Quérard, based on Hoffmann's *La Folle épreuve*—was written in partnership with Anicet Bourgeois and Eugène Durieu, the latter of whom kept a bag full of suitable subjects, from which Dumas picked this one. Written and produced (April 4, 1832) in the midst of

[1] The gradation adds enormously to the dramatic effect. Gaillardet, who claims to have invented the scene, says that he had made a single action of the unloosing, and admits that Dumas' treatment of it "tripled its effect."

the cholera depression, this piece (which turns on a husband for reasons unknown requiring his wife to give him out as dead), despite its own *verve* and the strong company—including Mademoiselle Mars—which played it, had little opportunity at first: revived afterwards, and many a time, it has always been successful and has been included permanently in the *repertoire* of the Français.

Notice next, as falling within this period, two more experiments in verse drama, *Caligula* and *L'Alchimiste*. For the first of these Dumas professes to have studied localities during a stay in Italy; but we fancy that the pages of Suetonius, spaced out by his own imagination, may have sufficed him; especially as the tragedy of *Caligula* (1837) was only a second thought, the original design suggested by Anicet Bourgeois having been that of a spectacular piece for the Cirque Franconi, where they had at the time a specially talented horse, who was to be the Incitatus given to the people as Consul by their mad Emperor. But something went wrong with the equine hero: hence the transformation into a verse tragedy. *Caligula*, however—essentially a *pièce à décors*—still retained something of the circus element; and it was a grievance to Dumas that the authorities of the Français would not allow the Emperor's chariot to be drawn across the stage by real horses. The serious motive of the play, like that of Corneille's *Polyeucte*, is the conversion by a Christian girl (Stella) of her pagan lover (Aquila): as Dumas treats it, the conversion is only a matter of passion, since Aquila troubles himself not at all with arguments, and is quite prepared to accept any creed which will win him the good graces of his lady. The best part of *Caligula* is no doubt the prologue, which offers a capital picture of the streets of Rome—the gossip at the barber's shop—the young man in a perfumed bath opening

his veins to escape the informers, and so forth. No such graphic presentment, and probably none so accurate, could have been made by a professed scholar or antiquarian, so that once more we are lost in wonder at the instinctive genius which—with or without study—always carried Dumas right into the true heart of his subject. The play was handsomely mounted, at an outlay of some £1,500, and it gave Mademoiselle Ida Ferrier, in the part of Stella, her first opportunity of appearing at the national theatre: it was patronized also by the heir-apparent, the young Duke of Orleans, whose friendship was not affected by political considerations. Still *Caligula* was not a financial success; neither was the drama translated from Milman's *Fazio*, and entitled *L'Alchimiste* (1839), nor *Lorenzino* (1842), which was developed from Alfred de Musset's *Spectacle dans un Fauteuil*.

Passing as *hors d'oeuvre* a comic opera (*Piquillo*, 1837), the libretto of which was written in partnership with Gérard de Nerval, we come to Dumas' first important comedy, and his best. On and off for the last five years he had been intending to develop an idea offered to him by an actor who had composed a slight vaudeville on the way in which a girl becomes compromised by visiting her father in prison. From that idea Dumas conceived and produced *Mademoiselle de Belleisle*, performed for the first time at the Comédie Française on April 2, 1839. Every one knows this comedy, its scene laid at Chantilly in 1726, its development arising from the interaction of two motives—the wager between the Duc de Richelieu and a friend, and the attempt of Mademoiselle de Belleisle to rescue, by the help of the Marquise de Prie, her father and brother from the Bastille. The play is dedicated as "a homage to the talent of Mademoiselle Mars," who acted the title part, this being the last new "creation"

of the famous *comédienne*, now past her sixtieth year. It may be added also—as a personal detail—that the author, having sent the MS. to the Queen of Spain, was in return for this attention decorated with the order of Isabella.[1]

Pursuing the same vein, Dumas wrote *Un Mariage sous Louis XV* (1841), *Halifax* (1842), and *Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr* (1843). The first of these, familiar in different forms on the English stage, is concerned with the *mariage de convenance* between the Comte de Candale and Mademoiselle de Torigny, and the steps by which this pair, beginning with "a little aversion," pass from indifference to jealousy, and from jealousy to mutual attachment. A thin substance and an old subject; but the brightness of the dialogue, the smartness of the repartee and the skilful mechanism of the piece give it a value which compensates for the lack of psychological analysis—an exercise not congenial to its author. The origin of this play Dumas explains as due to a remark made to him by Prosper Mérimée, who, referring to his success with *Mademoiselle de Belleisle*, asked him why he had not yet written another comedy for the Français. "Because I haven't been asked to," was the haughty reply—for Dumas ever since the *Antony* affair stood very much on his dignity with the Comédie Française. Accordingly Mérimée got M. de Rémusat, Minister of the Interior, to write and "ask" for a play, promising in this case also—as with *Caligula* and *Mademoiselle de Belleisle—a prime*, or retaining fee of £200, besides the usual "author's rights" of ten per cent. Hence *Un Mariage sous Louis XV*.

Of very similar pattern was the third of the well known

[1] He tells also (in *Souvenirs Dramatiques*) how instead of reading this play in the usual way to the Committee of the Français, he recited it from the plan in his head, not yet having written it, and how the Committee unanimously accepted it.

comedies—*Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr*. Here also a compulsory marriage is the starting point, and the subject is the pursuit by two young ladies of two fugitive husbands. This was the play which came near to causing a mortal feud between two old friends. For Janin in the *Journal des Débats* permitted himself an amount of criticism and satire which provoked Dumas to a hostile and personal reply. After further polemic and personalities a duel seemed inevitable, though three weeks of negotiation proved that neither party was much bent on blood. Still "honour" had to be considered. They arrive on the ground. Dumas, having choice of weapons, has elected—as was his wont—the sword in preference to the pistol.

"Never," says Janin nobly, "will I fight with the sword: I know a secret thrust which will lay you dead in a moment: it would be an act of murder on my part. No, I insist on pistols, merely from generosity."

"Pistols! my dear sir," replies his opponent, "I should be an assassin. Why, I can kill a fly at forty yards, and you're considerably larger than a fly."

Then, conscious of each other's magnanimity, the two embrace, and become excellent friends again afterwards. It was no doubt with a remembrance of the unpleasant surprise caused by Janin's remarks on *Les Demoiselles* that Dumas, many years later, in discussing the leading critics of his time, declared that "Sainte-Beuve was a poet, Gautier a jeweller, and Janin a creature of caprice," whose pen might run away with him and make him curse where he meant to bless or *vice versâ*.[1]

[1] *Causeries*, vol. i. "Les Rois du Lundi," where an entertaining sketch is given of some author who, having heard that Janin has expressed at the theatre a very favourable opinion of his play, waits eagerly to see next Monday's notice from the "prince of critics." Slowly to him the hours of Saturday and Sunday pass;

And now we find, reviewing these years (1831–1843) that Dumas has covered the whole range of theatrical composition. In this period we have, with the addition of the preceding *Henri III* and *Christine*, not only the best part of his dramatic work, but also every variety of category needed for the indexing of such of his later plays as will be noticed in their place.

Tragedy, drama, comedy—in their technical senses—are all here; but the distinction between the first two—a distinction not recognized by the Romantic school—is, in Dumas' case especially, a vain one. When he labelled one of his works as "tragedy," it was done partly to suit the traditions of the Français and partly to signify a separation in his own purpose between higher and lower flights of drama. He was not satisfied to develop a personal mood or the spirit of his time, as in the *Antony* sort of plays; nor was he content to manipulate, however successfully, sensations of horror, as in *La Tour de Nesle*: he desired also to appeal to the superior intelligence and the finer emotions. For that reason he took in hand the Alexandrine and wrote *Charles VII* at the cost of—for him—much time and labour, and *Caligula*, which involved archaeology and religious sentiment. Was he grappling with an alien work? It may be so, partly because his genius was essentially popular and the masterpieces of French tragedy are academic; partly also because, unlike Hugo, he lacked the faculty of expressing himself in polished verse, and his lines, except for occasional felicities, jarred on the critical French ear. "Occasional" is too niggardly a word, for *Charles VII*, *Caligula*, and

at an impossibly early hour of Monday morning he sends out for the newspaper, and when at last it comes, tears it open and begins to read the long expected article. Amazement—horror—rage! He finds that Janin has "gone for" him, tooth and nail.

L'Alchimiste contain very many *beaux vers*, and the first of these at any rate—whether we call it a middling tragedy or an excellent tragic drama—deserves a far higher place than has generally been given it. Dumas, be it remembered, had all the qualities of a poet—imagination, enthusiasm, sentiment, facility—with the single exception of verse-craft, or poetic style. This particular deficiency he often laments and even makes too much of: unusual modesty is apt to be excessive. Admiring superlatively the verse of *Marion Delorme*, he says: "Gladly would I have given ten years of my life to attain a form and style like that—I who am so lacking in style." "Dramas," then, let his plays be called, and "popular dramas"; and let them fall into two great classes—the modern and the historic. The first of these, comprising *Antony* and its four successors, is simple enough: the second needs a liberal interpretation, since the degrees of history range from a mere peg, as in *Catherine Howard* and *La Tour de Nesle*, to a substantial frame, as in *Henri III* and *Charles VII*.

And we shall still have to make room for that department in which *Mademoiselle de Belleisle* serves as a type. It has been fashionable to speak of Dumas' comedies as his best dramatic work: so would naturally say those playgoers who like moderate rather than extreme sensations—who prefer to be tickled rather than thrilled; so also have said many critics, following Sainte-Beuve, who wish thereby to depreciate the dramas and relegate them to a back place. But here we have to guard against delusion. *Mademoiselle de Belleisle* has elements of Marivaux, of Lemercier, of Scribe; but does any one imagine that it is mere Marivaudage or mere Scribism? Let him analyse this "comedy" with its happy ending, and he will find drama—not to say tragedy—underlying it. The pleasant frivolity of the first

two acts is succeeded, as the action works out, by the passionate scene between D'Aubigny and his betrothed, by the pathetic scene in which the innocent girl stands helpless between the Duke and the man who loves her, by the ruthless jealousy of the favourite, by the wager of death following from the wager of sport. Beneath the smooth surface of polite dialogue and elegant surroundings all the intenser emotions are allowed to have play. That is the kernel of it, that is drama pushing itself through the veneer of comedy: the combination is effective, as M. Sardou has since then proved; and the opinion of M. Sardou on the supremacy of Dumas in his day and generation is the opinion of the greatest of living playwrights. Let us put it plainly and exactly. Praise as we may—and we cannot praise too highly—the ease, freedom, and good humour of the comedies; these are but secondary qualities—side currents from the greater power which generated the dramas. Dumas cannot be dismissed as the writer of agreeable comedy: he is, in the fullest and widest sense, "the man of the theatre."

CHAPTER VII

IN PARIS AND ABROAD

(1832–1843)

FROM a web so tangled as that of Dumas' life we have to disengage the main threads, and for that reason exclusive attention was given for a while to the dramatic work which, both by quantity and by quality, constitutes the principal activity of his early manhood. Across this thread run other concerns and interests, grave or gay, pleasant or painful, which have to be woven into the fabric.

And first, it was a question of celebrating the success of *Antony* and of *Richard Darlington*. At the beginning of 1832 a grand *bal costumé* had been given at the Tuileries, to which the political and official world had been invited but not the men of art and letters. "Why," said Bocage to Dumas, "don't you give a costume ball to all our people as a set off to the other one?" and the suggestion was acceptable to one who considered himself "in opposition." It was true that his apartments in the Square d'Orléans were not quite so spacious as those of the Tuileries: fortunately he was able to expand them by taking a vacant *suite* on the same floor—four empty and unfurnished rooms. Should they be given over to the house-painter and the paper-hanger? That would have been commonplace, It was work not for artisans but for artists. And the artists offered themselves readily—the leading painters of the day, Dela-

croix, the two Boulangers, Décamps, Johannot, Grenville Jadin, and others, all friends of Dumas. Some set themselves to the ceiling, others to the door-panels: canvas was hung over the bare walls and thereon were painted scenes from *Lucrèce Borgia, Cinq-Mars,* the *Sire de Giac,* together with fancy sketches—lions, tigers, cornfields, and the like; never before were such decorations seen. To provide supper for the guests was the next concern, and here again there was no resort to the vulgar channels of trade. But Dumas, getting permission for a day's shooting in the forest of La Ferté-Vidame, and taking with him five or six friends, returned to Paris bringing back nine deer and three hares. Five of the deer had fallen to his gun—two of them at one shot! Here was substance enough for a Gargantuan feast: variety was secured by a system of exchange similar to that employed in the early visit to Paris. In return for a portion of the venison a caterer furnished a magnificent fifty-pound salmon and a gigantic galantine of veal; two deer were kept to be roasted whole, the three hares went to compose a noble game pie. With the solids thus ready beforehand, it remained only to order in the lighter fare and a plentiful supply of champagne, Burgundy, and Bordeaux. Great was the sensation caused by this ball, in which costume was obligatory and no masks were permitted: only, as a slight concession, the serious people were allowed to wear dominos over their evening dress. Dumas had modelled his own costume on a sixteenth century engraving—green doublet with gold lacing, silk breeches red and white, black velvet shoes embroidered with gold. The lady who did the honours of the house, Mélanie S., was attired, like Rubens' wife, in velvet robe and black feather hat. Two orchestras played simultaneously, and dancing went on through five rooms. It would require a page to give a list of the guests. Besides

the artists already named there was a host of musicians, authors, actors, and actresses—Rossini, Zimmermann, Alfred and Paul de Musset, Eugène Sue, Nestor Roqueplan, Mars, Georges, Bocage, Lemaître; "serious people" too, like Buloz, Odilon Barrot, and La Fayette: here at random are a few of the familiar names. Tissot the Academician—by a freak of taste—came got up as an invalid: hardly had he appeared when Jadin, dressed—another freak of taste—as an undertaker's mute, proceeded to dog him from room to room, repeating at intervals, "I wait." The invalid soon became uncomfortable and retired; the company, which at one time numbered seven hundred, was amused by this touch of the grotesque. Supper at 3 a.m. revived every one, and it was not till nine in the morning that the ball ended, when the revellers, headed by the band, sallied out and danced a wild galop all the length of the street. "I have often," says the host, "thought of giving another such ball, but it has always seemed to me an impossibility!"

A few months later this carnival gaiety was exchanged for the heavy gloom of the cholera pestilence. From his windows Dumas saw fifty and sixty funeral processions passing every day to the Montmartre cemetery: engrossed in work he agreed with Harel that the best way to deal with the cholera was to regard it as a myth. Experience taught him its reality. One evening, after seeing some friends out, while he stood on the landing, suddenly a trembling of the legs took him.

"Lor', sir!" said his servant, Catherine, as he came in, "how pale you are!" He looked in the glass and saw himself pallid: at the same time he became conscious that he was shivering all over.

"That is how it always begins," observed the ominous Catherine.

"It! What do you mean?"

"The cholera, sir!"

"Cholera, then, is it? Well—quick—bring me a lump of sugar soaked in ether, and run at once for the doctor."

Catherine rushed out, ether the dominant idea of her flurried brain; and, returning as her master had just crawled into bed, she handed him not what he had asked for but a wineglass full of ether, which Dumas, without stopping to look, drained off at one gulp. The effect was stupendous: "I felt as though I had swallowed the sword of the destroying angel!"

After two hours of unconsciousness he woke to find the doctor giving him a vapour bath and a nurse administering friction. Happily the attack—thanks perhaps to the prompt and drastic "etherization"—proved to be a mild one; and after a few days in bed the patient, though still for some time weak, was able to resume his occupations. One of these was, as we know, *La Tour de Nesle*, concerning which Harel was instant in season and out of season—Harel who declared that fever produced a state of "cerebral exaltation" most suitable for writing.

But another thought had come to Dumas—as yet only in vague outline—a thought so fruitful that its inception demands a moment's attention. The attractive side of history, revealed by Scott's novels, he had already utilized for the stage; but he felt that the stage exhausted neither his own possibilities nor those of the subject. Around him the air was full of literature of a certain sort—history treated from its romantic side. Stendhal, Thierry, Michelet, Vitet, Mérimée, De Vigny had been or were in their different ways all at this work. And Dumas, who caught everything that was in the air, took the history germ as readily as he had taken the cholera.

"There was at that time a class of literature which occupied a middle position between the Novel and the Drama, having in some degree the interest of the one and the grip of the other—an alternation of dialogue with narrative which went under the name of *Historic Scenes*. Possessed as I was of an aptitude for the theatre, I now set myself to cut out, to narrate, and to put in dialogue scenes taken from *The History of the Dukes of Burgundy*."

It was a case of learning in order to teach, or rather of *dum docent discunt*; for hitherto Dumas, despite his extensive course of literature, had not pushed his historical studies beyond what was necessary for the writing of his plays. He knew therefore, from reference books, something about the time of Charles VII and about that of Henri III; but there were gaps wide and deep. These he was filling up, and in one way or another—chiefly by the help of Barante—he had learnt enough about the reign of Charles VI to contribute to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* several "scenes" of that period, which were afterwards bound together into the story of *Isabel de Bavière*. But of anything anterior to Charles VI he had no idea; it was tentative groping, taking of notes, learning of rhymed aids to memory—all vastly laborious. One morning Delanoue coming into his room found him at work.

"What's that you are reading?" said he. And Dumas, ashamed of his ignorance, tried to conceal the elementary history book like a schoolboy detected in using a crib. But his friend was able to show him a more excellent way, by referring him to Chateaubriand and to Thierry. Hence a great illumination on Clovis, Charlemagne, and all those early times, from which was born the idea of an introductory work which should precede the series of *Historic Scenes*, and should be called *Gaule et France*. On this he had already

made a beginning when—as mentioned above in connexion with the Lamarque riots—prudence and health dictated a foreign tour.

In several ways this *Voyage en Suisse* forms a new point of departure for Dumas both as a man and as an author. Personally, July 21, 1832, when he started to cross for the first time the frontier of his native land, marks the termination of the *Antony* mood—the assumed misanthropy with which he had tried so vainly to invest himself. Once on the journey—with fresh air, new scenes, and restored health—he dropped for ever the ill-fitting mantle of the pessimist and regained the boyish spirits which were his nature. Then, again, the charm of travel, appealing to him in a way quite uncommon among Frenchmen, brought out certain faculties hitherto dormant. His own words on this point deserve quoting:

"My dramatic work and my efforts at historical writing had developed two principal qualities—those of dialogue and of narrative; and these are qualities which—speaking with my usual frankness about myself—I may say that I possess in a superior degree. But at this time I had not yet discovered the existence of two other qualities no less important—'light-heartedness and a lively amusing style' (*la gaieté et la verve amusante*). As a rule people are cheerful and light-hearted because their digestion is in good order and they have nothing to bother them; but in my case this condition is a persistent one, not indeed making me insensible to sorrow, which whether affecting my friends or myself moves me deeply, but rendering me proof against all the worries, cares and conflicts of daily life."

It is needless to say that this *gaieté* and *verve* of the writer—the consequence of full-blood, good humour, and sheer animal spirits in the man—are just the qualities which make

Dumas so unrivalled a *conteur*—"the best possible story-teller in print," as was said long ago;[1] and these are the qualities which, while they distinguish every volume of the *Impressions de Voyage*, are in none more delightful than in the first series—the one which describes his Swiss tour. "Impressions of Travel" he called them: to make the title quite sufficient let us say, "*My* Impressions of Travel—those produced on me and those which I produced"—scenes, places and persons viewed through the personal medium just as we have already seen through that medium the events of the July Revolution. There is no wilful perversion of facts in either case, nor any intention to deceive: it is only a question of proportion and of colouring. Such being the avowed spirit in which Dumas set himself to popularize the world, beginning with Switzerland, it would be absurd to press too much for accuracy in details of history or geography; for these purposes the ordinary guide books exist—a heavy burden to many. Dumas has nothing to do with them; his travels are more in the style of Sterne or of Xavier de Maistre, though without so much sentimentality as the one or so much sensibility as the other. Essentially, they are scenes in which he himself is the chief actor, and in which—with the simplicity of an age before self-advertisement had attained its present subtlety—he blows his own trumpet loudly and openly. It is for all the world like Buffon reading his pages to the ladies of fashion and invariably ending, according to Voltaire, by turning to the company with an "Avouez, mesdames, que cela est beau!"

So much being foresaid, the reader of the *Voyage en Suisse* will agree that Dumas' countrymen were right in discovering at this time that he was an *homme d'esprit*. There is no

[1] *Selected Essays*, by Abraham Hayward.

mistaking the wit—or rather the humour—which unforced and unaggressive turns everything to its own account. At Lyons, for example, Dumas was struck with the commercial spirit of the place, which he illustrates by an anecdote concerning *Antony*. Every one of course had heard of that play, and a good many had seen it—among others a certain merchant, who confessed that he had followed the performance keenly as far as the third act, after which it ceased to interest him. Why? Because in that act Antony buys a post-chaise from the landlady, pays cash and *omits to take a receipt!* The same disposition was found in the community at large. A railway had lately been constructed which at one point passed under a short tunnel, too narrow to leave room for foot passengers. So a notice was put up, "Persons are forbidden to walk under this bridge under penalty of being crushed." As this warning was ineffectual and daily risks were being run the last words were altered into "under penalty of a fine." Then only did the people of Lyons desist from taking the short cut.

The track of Dumas leads through places familiar to every one nowadays. At Geneva he admired the jewellers' shops; at Ferney the chapel with the inscription "Deo erexit Voltaire" drew from him this remark: "Its object was to let the world know that God and Voltaire had come to terms at last; the world heard this news with satisfaction, but it always suspected Voltaire of having made the first advances (Voltaire, by the way, and the Voltaire-worship of the French *bourgeois* formed one of Dumas' special aversions). Then to Coppet and the château of Madame de Staël, which moved him to tears, whereas Ferney had made him laugh. At Bex he fished with a lantern and billhook: on the Lake of Zug, in the absence of nets or lines, he went out and shot a fine trout by moonlight: at Cha-

mounix, where the Mer de Glace made him uncomfortable, he explained to the guide that he was suffering from *mal de mer*. Martigny was the scene of an episode afterwards to become historical. Here the landlord, by way of honouring a distinguished man of letters, assigned him a separate table and told him about a bear recently killed in the neighbourhood, how the wounded beast had succeeded before dying in killing the man who shot it and devouring a part of his head. Hence the idea of the delicious bear steak, the fame of which being spread abroad brought tourist after tourist to Martigny, each demanding *bifteck d'ours*, until the distracted landlord cursed the very name of Dumas, whereas (says our traveller) "if he had been a wise man he would promptly have changed his Hôtel de La Poste into the Hôtel du Bifteck d'Ours, and made his fortune. Dear me! how ungrateful some people are!"

At another place a marmot was served up at *table d'hôte* which none of the visitors would touch, declaring that it looked like a cooked baby, whereupon Dumas—with the culinary skill for which he was afterwards noted—at once set about the making of an omelette, and handing it to the ladies said, "An omelette is to cookery what the sonnet is to poetry." And so on. Whenever the *conteur* is talking about himself he is at his best: sometimes the opportunity of a personal *mise en scène* is not forthcoming; then he falls back on history and legend, and—though the tale is told agreeably enough—our interest flags, possibly because we have heard it before. We resent rather, as "padding," several chapters devoted to the Swiss wars, to the story of William Tell, or to a repetition of Werner's horror—*The Twenty-fourth of February*—suggested by the inn of Schwartzbach. Happily we soon get back to Dumas himself, who finds in his various guides the second characters necessary

for making a little drama. "I searched my guides as I would turn over the pages of a MS.," says he. From one —old Jacques Balmat—he gets a full account of the first ascent of Mont Blanc; with another he goes chamois hunting, and though suffering terribly from dizziness refuses to drink the chamois blood prescribed as an infallible cure; from the faithful Willer—his guide in the Oberland—he extracts all kinds of quaint information, so that we hear how the bears of Berne had cause to complain of the French Revolution and the plunder by a French army of the treasure bequeathed for their support. The worst of it is that the scepticism of the modern tourist has already begun to infect the simple mountain folk and to make them shy of telling their simple beliefs—a great misfortune for one who belongs, as Dumas says he is proud of belonging, to the class of "credulous" travellers. "Happy those who believe; they are the elect of poetry."

Fellow travellers of all nationalities come in of course for mention—among them two Englishmen of different types, the one a large man of the traditional "goddem" sort who blustered and ate more than his fair share at *table d'hôte;* the other a certain "Sir Williams," wealthy, but afflicted with excessive shyness, who was induced to confide his sorrows to sympathetic ears. There were also residing in Switzerland at that time distinguished compatriots to whom Dumas paid his respects. At Lucerne he lunched with Chateaubriand, then watched the great man feeding his fowls, and listened admiringly to various remarks on the effects of the July Revolution; at Arenenburgh he stayed for three days with the ex-Queen of Holland, Hortense Bonaparte, and there met Madame Récamier—still beautiful and young-looking—to whom he enlarged upon his favourite theory of Napoleon as the instrument used by Providence

to prepare the way for Republics; at Reichenau—where Louis Philippe in the days of exile had earned his living by teaching mathematics—reflections on the vicissitudes of the great led him to send off a poetic letter to the Prince Royal, the young Duke of Orleans.

By October of this year (1832) Dumas was back again in Paris. While abroad he had heard of the failure of *Le Fils de l'Émigré*, and now on his return found that theatrical managers looked coldly upon him. "This was the first backset I met with in my career," says he, "and I recovered from it, as I have done from many others." His dramatic prestige was in fact destined to be fully restored by the success of *Kean*, about which Heine wrote: "The reputation of Dumas has reappeared in all its old brilliance." Meanwhile he temporarily renounced the theatre and occupied himself in contributing various articles to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—mostly relating to his Swiss experiences; at the same time he finished *Gaule et France*. This work, based (as we have seen) on recent studies of Chateaubriand, Thierry, and Guizot, and in places copied with very slight alterations from those authors, made some sensation. Admirers of the dramatist could not imagine what business he had with dry solid history; experts detected at once the compilation, and resented an intrusion into their own province. Dumas had, however, assimilated a good deal of history, despite the contempt of *savants*—which, for that matter, he fully reciprocated. The Caesar whom he now first dealt with reappears later on in a more popular shape in *Les Grands Hommes en Robe de Chambre*.

"I didn't know that you were a student of archaeology," said a local magnate to him one day, surprised at his quick recognition of a bust of the great Julius.

"I am not," replied Dumas, "but I probably know as

much about Caesar as some other people do: yes, I have written a history of Caesar."

"You! A historian! Well, the work has never been spoken of among the learned and scientific people."

"Learned people never do speak of me."

"Yet a history of Caesar ought to have made some stir."

"Mine made none: people read it—that was all. It is the unreadable histories that make a stir: they are like the dinners which you can't digest: digestible dinners give you no cause to think about them on the next day."

The erudition of *Gaule et France* may, then, be disregarded. To its author it served as a *ballon d'essai*: he quickly realized that he was on the wrong path, and returned to his incomplete *Isabel de Bavière*; in other words, he moved from serious history to romantic history, leaving only one step more—and that a very slight step—to historical romance. Yet the book[1] contains at least one original passage worthy of remark—that in which the writer predicts (in 1832) the future establishment of a Republic with a President elected for five years, a man of the people, with a very moderate civil list: no one will deny to this prophecy the credit of being made before the event. An even more interesting forecast may be found in another of Dumas' works, when, writing some years before the Crimean war, he discusses the conflicting interests of European powers, and declares that —in view of their respective needs and of the obstacle which England forms to each—France and Russia are natural allies, and ought to be united by a common understanding. Was Dumas, then, also among the prophets? Hardly that, but a poet—a man of ideas—drawing a bow at a venture will

[1] That is, the first edition (Paris, Canel et Guyot, 1833). Subsequent editions have omitted the passage.

sometimes hit a mark beyond the vision of statesmen and philosophers.

In another way the publication of *Gaule et France* is notable, since it formed the starting-point of an indecisive literary war waged at intervals during the next two or three years. Among the papers which noticed the work, one, the *Journal des Débats*, contained a very severe criticism signed "Granier de Cassagnac." Who, it may be asked, was M. Granier de Cassagnac? Later on he became well known as an active, if variable, politician and publicist; and he was the father of a distinguished Frenchman of our own time. At the period we are speaking of he was a young man, recently come to Paris, eager to push himself to the front, and aware that the best way to make your own name is by attacking some name already established. Beginning with this article on *Gaule et France*, he proceeded, gathering strength as he went, and assisted afterwards by Loeve-Weimars and others, to an elaborate examination of the dramas of Alexandre Dumas and a tolerably complete display of the various plagiarisms which might be found in *Henri III*, *Christine*, and *Charles VII*. The zeal of M. de Cassagnac occasionally surpassed his discretion; he discovered sometimes sources which did not exist and analogies which presented no points of contact, but on the whole he succeeded in amassing a fair collection of those debts which we have indicated in dealing with the different plays. To the article which appeared on July 30, 1834, Dumas replied in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Rather thin in itself, but supplemented copiously in the memoirs, this rejoinder may be read under the title of "How I became a Dramatic Author" in the first volume of his *Théâtre Complet*. Summarized, it amounts to a defence of himself based on the examples of Shakespeare, Molière, and others, and expressed

in the famous formula that "the man of genius does not steal but conquers." The whole matter, of little interest at this date, turns ultimately—if we lay aside verbal quotations made without acknowledgment—upon the unsatisfactory word "originality," about which, so far as it affects dramatic authorship, enough has been already said in connexion with particular dramas and with the dispute over *La Tour de Nesle*. The net result of the Cassagnac-Dumas controversy was on the one hand to make every critic in Paris on the alert to discover fresh "conquests," and on the other to make Dumas so ready, for the future, to acknowledge himself "an arranger of the ideas of others" that he not infrequently invented "others" simply for the wicked pleasure of mystifying Quérard and the *supercherie*-hunters; as, for example, when he professed an imaginary *Memoir of the Comte de la Fère* to be one of his authorities for the story of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*. On the whole this quarrel—considering that it was a literary one—was conducted with a fair amount of amenity; and M. de Cassagnac, who protested that he had never denied the talent of M. Dumas but only objected to his literary "methods," was able afterwards,[1] in praising *Mademoiselle de Belleisle*, to take credit to himself for having turned a sinner from the error of his ways.

But the articles in the *Journal des Débats* involved one unpleasant personal consequence. Their writer was in close relations with Victor Hugo, who had taken him up and introduced him to literary and journalistic circles; moreover some of the plagiarisms which Cassagnac cited were from Hugo's dramas. But Dumas' enthusiasm for Hugo we know, and outwardly the two were on terms of cordial

[1] Granier de Cassagnac, *Oeuvres Littéraires*.

intimacy. Was, then, the author of *Hernani* responsible for this attack on his friend? There were not wanting those who saw in him the instigator of Cassagnac's articles: it is at any rate inconceivable that he should have been ignorant of them or that he could not have prevented them if he had chosen, since it was he who had originally recommended Cassagnac to the editor of the *Débats*. Hugo's disclaimer, when he was taxed by Dumas with an unfriendly act, was more Hugoesque than convincing, and resolved itself chiefly into high-sounding phrases about "loyal heart," "unworthy suspicions," and so forth. And yet, in spite of some mystery and reticence on the part of Dumas, who only refers vaguely to "an estrangement between Hugo and me for which some of our friends were responsible," the position is quite intelligible. It was not, we may be sure, that Hugo was annoyed at a few borrowings from him—mutual principles were so much in vogue just then that authors almost realized the condition of "having all things in common," and the balance of obligation as between the two was decisively turned against Hugo by *Marie Tudor* and *Lucrèce Borgia*, which are palpable and poor imitations of *Christine* and *La Tour de Nesle*. Nor, again, was it merely a difference of literary opinion, though it is known that Dumas had criticized rudely the character of Marie Tudor.[1] The simple solution, and one which no impartial judge will doubt, is to be found in a failing from which not even the gods are exempt—and Victor Hugo was not at that time a candidate for apotheosis. On the contrary he was mainly

[1] "Why on earth," he said, "did you make the poor sickly bigoted Mary into a shameless courtesan?"

"For that matter," replied Hugo warmly, "what pains you took to violate your Queen Christine!"

Dumas' retort was crushing, if not courteous: "Quand je la viole, moi, je lui fais un enfant!"

anxious for success as a dramatist: it vexed him that in this line he could not compete with Dumas, and he was not sorry to see his successful "friend" receiving a little chastisement. *Hinc illae lacrimae!* Happily they were soon wiped away. Dumas admired Hugo too much to cherish long suspicions: the magnanimity was on his side, but the other no doubt returned to his better self. The occasion of their reconciliation is not certain. According to *Victor Hugo, par un Témoin de sa Vie* it would have occurred before the opening of the Musée Historique at Versailles, a few weeks after the marriage of the Duc d'Orléans in 1837. In connexion with this ceremony various honours and distinctions were to be conferred, among the names recommended being those of Hugo and Dumas. As the King objected to the latter, Hugo declared that he would not be decorated without his friend, and exerted himself successfully to get Dumas' name restored to the list. The two went together to the function at Versailles, and their promotions were gazetted in the *Moniteur Universel* of July 3 —the one to the rank of "officer" of the Legion of Honour, the other to that of "chevalier." These facts may be correct, though the probability is that Dumas owed the distinction he now received—which, it will be remembered, had been refused to him in 1830—to the friendship of the Duc d'Orléans; but the end of the estrangement seems properly to belong to the following year (1838), when Dumas, who had just lost his mother, wrote inviting Hugo to attend the funeral, and got this response:

"I would have desired a less sad occasion for grasping your hand. You shall see to-morrow, as soon as we look each other in the face, that you have been wrong ever to doubt me. I will be at your house at the time you name.

You have done well to count on me: it is a return of noble confidence worthy of you and worthy of me.

"Your Friend,

"VICTOR."

This document, while indicating the close of the episode, shows also that it had not been closed before.

In referring to the Duc d'Orléans a royal personage has been mentioned of whom Dumas has everything good to say. Their friendship had begun in the days before Louis Philippe's accession changed his son from Duc de Chartres to Duc d'Orléans, and it lasted till the Duke's untimely death in 1842. To Dumas the Duke was an *homme d'esprit*—"and as a rule princes are deficient in *esprit*, or if they have it must be very careful to conceal a quality the discovery of which would be fatal to them." He was also an *homme de coeur*—a friend without disagreeable candour, a patron without the airs of patronage. Dumas knew this Prince both in lighter and in graver moods, but it is the latter to which he recurs most often. At Compiègne, one day in 1836, a party was assembled for shooting. Luncheon was spread on the grass, and the royal host requested Dumas to carve a pheasant. He, excusing himself, passed it on to Pasquier —surgeon to H.R.H.—who performed the task most skilfully. Watching him the Prince grew melancholy and abstracted; then, in reply to the inquiring looks of his friends, he said, "Yes—you want to know my thoughts? I am thinking that Pasquier, my surgeon, will some day cut me up as cleverly as he has been cutting up that bird." A true foreboding; for less than six years later it was Pasquier's duty to make the autopsy of his master's dead body.

A touching proof of the Prince's kind-heartedness was

given on the occasion of the great sorrow which befell Dumas in 1838. On August 1 of that year his mother died in consequence of a second paralytic seizure, and her son—recalling early memories and conscious perhaps of later neglectfulness—was overwhelmed with grief. On the impulse of the moment, while watching his mother's last hours, he wrote a few lines to the Duke expressing a prayer that he might long be spared the loss of a father or mother. An hour later a footman came up to inquire for Madame Dumas, and added that the Prince himself was in his carriage at the door: he had gone first to the Rue de Rivoli—where Dumas' rooms were, supposing that the mother lived with her son—and from there he had been directed to the Faubourg du Roule, where Madame Dumas resided. Dumas hastened down. "The carriage door was open; the Prince stretched out both his hands to me, and I laid my head upon his knees. I know not how long I stayed thus: I only remember that the night was beautiful and calm, and that through the window on the other side the stars were shining in the sky."[1] Madame Dumas was buried at Villers-Cotterets beside her husband in the grave where at last her son also was to rest. In the flood of filial sentiment unloosed by his mother's death Dumas interested himself in a scheme for perpetuating the memory of his father, the general, by setting up a statue of him in his native island of San Domingo. For this purpose a letter beginning "chers compatriotes" was written to the leading Haytians who had initiated the scheme, suggesting a subscription to be open to all coloured people and to be limited to one franc per head, from which it was expected that between thirty and forty thousand francs would be raised. Nothing, however, came of this proposal.

A few weeks later, as a distraction from sorrow, Dumas

[1] *Les Morts vont vite*, vol. 1.

set out for Belgium and the Rhine—a tour which forms the fourth of his peregrinations. Switzerland in 1832 had been followed, in 1834, by an expedition to the south of France, the nature of which is described in the opening chapters as "neither a promenade of fashionable people nor an expedition of *savants*, but a pilgrimage of artists." The party was composed, at starting, of Jadin, Amaury Duval (both landscape painters), Dumas, who of course managed the caravan, and "Mylord"—Jadin's English bulldog. The tour, leisurely and enjoyable, comprised all the quaint southern towns—Valence, Orange, Avignon, Nismes, Tarascon, etc.—full of architectural and antiquarian interest, which finds scope and variety in the genial pages of the *conteur*. But, as with the Swiss travels, the most attractive bits are those in which the personal element predominates. At Avignon, remembering that Marshal Brune had been his godfather, Dumas insisted on having "room No. 3," where he discovered the hole in the wall made by the bullet which had penetrated there after killing the gallant soldier. At Mornas, where the Provençal dialect was most pronounced, the party found it difficult to make themselves understood, since Parisian French was useless, and none of them felt able to follow the example of an Englishman they met there —a man who spoke seven languages, but had been obliged to imitate the cackling of a hen in order to procure a couple of new-laid eggs! At Arles, Dumas, having bought a wooden image of some saint, underwent religious emotions so acute that he was filled with superstitious fears not relieved until he had set the saint on a chest of drawers and offered up a prayer to it—"a thing which I regret to say I had not done for some time previously."

Jadin plays a secondary part throughout, but not so the famous "Mylord"—a marvel of ferocity who, to say nothing

of cats and rats, had once engaged with a bear and hung on to the beast's ear for a quarter of an hour, by which time Bruin was glad to get rid of his opponent at the cost of an ear; after this it is not surprising that at Nismes, during the bull-branding in the amphitheatre, "Mylord" should have tackled a bull and again emerged victorious.

"Travellers' tales," perhaps, but all very pleasant to read.

Next year (1835) Dumas was again on the move—this time visiting Italy, which with Sicily he thoroughly explored—not without adventures. At Marseilles he stayed with Méry, prince of improvised rhymes and fancies; at Toulon he was hailed in the street by a convict who claimed Mademoiselle Mars as a mutual acquaintance, the man having stolen some jewellery from that actress. At Rome he interviewed the Pope, at Naples he was arrested by order of King Ferdinand, at Foligno by Papal carabineers; from Savoy he was ordered to depart by the officials of Charles Albert, having come under suspicion of carbonarism because of the grey slouch hat he wore. It seems that his reputation as a fierce republican, gained in Paris, had preceded him to Italy and alarmed the monarchic governments of that country. Florence, more hospitable, attracted him chiefly: there he stayed, and to that town in following years he often returned, coming to regard it as his second home. In one respect only was he unacceptable to the authorities of the Tuscan capital. There was no objection to Dumas the politician, nor to Dumas the private person, if he could be private; but Dumas the dramatist was regarded as a dangerous and immoral author, and for a long time his plays were prohibited.[1] Otherwise Florence was wholly

[1] He tells on this subject an amusing, if possibly hyperbolical, story. One day a French company on tour came to Florence, and their manager, learning that Dumas was in the town, called upon

agreeable. "It is indeed," he says, "the El Dorado of individual liberty: in all other countries, even the most republican, the clocks are subject to a sort of tyranny in having to strike more or less simultaneously. At Florence not so: the same hour goes on being sounded for about twenty minutes." A stranger once complained of this peculiarity—"What the devil do you want to know the time for?" was the reply of the stolid Tuscan. Not the least pleasant part of this tour—marred only by the surfeit of macaroni and polenta—was a sail round Sicily and Southern Italy, followed by an inspection of Calabrian towns, where the ruins of Paestum, once the "garden of roses," called forth an alarming wealth of classical quotation. Let us add that with Dumas—who, to baffle the Neapolitan Government travelled as a "Monsieur Guichard"—Jadin and "Mylord" were again on the scene. The feelings of the latter rashly treading volcanic soil may be imagined: he revenged himself on the cats of the country in such wholesale fashion that it became necessary to draw up a regular tariff of damages, the Italian equivalent of a franc being fixed as the compensation for each slaughtered cat, and the bill being settled before leaving each place. All these

him and told him that they intended to play *Antony*, *Richard Darlington*, and *La Tour de Nesle*. "They won't let you," said Dumas, "but try, if you like!" Sure enough permission was refused and the manager was desperate. Then Dumas, by way of obliging his friends and at the same time "taking a rise" out of the censorship, got the names of the plays altered and assigned their authorship to Scribe. Thus *Antony* became *L'Assassin par Amour*, *Richard Darlington* became *L'Ambitieux, ou le Fils du Bourreau*, and *La Tour de Nesle* became *L'Adultère puni*—all described as "par Eugène Scribe." The authorities passed them; the performance took place—the Grand Duke himself being present and applauding heartily. "All which proves," adds Dumas maliciously, "the great advantage which my friend Scribe derives from his reputation as a 'moral' author."

wanderings and adventures are writ large in the pages of Dumas, and no one should omit to read them though he skip the dissertations on history, legend, and the fine arts.

Then, after a year's stay in Paris, came in 1838 the expedition to the Rhine. Proceeding first to Belgium, fortified with an introduction to the King of the Belgians, Dumas was entertained by Royalty at a great banquet at Malines and received the "Order of Leopold." Ida Ferrier accompanied him on this journey, and Gérard de Nerval joined them at Frankfort, where they stayed a month, making it the headquarters for many excursions.

These various jaunts abroad must have been costly, for the traveller journeyed *en grand seigneur*, to the greater glory of France and of himself. Therefore he resorted again to his old friend Porcher, handing over as security for a loan a dramatization of his novel *Le Capitaine Paul*, which Porcher, as the loan was not repaid by the specified time, sold to the manager of the Panthéon, who produced it there under the title of *Paul Jones* during the author's absence and somewhat to his disgust. Account-keeping was not much in Dumas' line, but we have his authority for stating that "whereas on the French tour I had spent 6,000 francs, the Italian cost me 18,000." What the expenses of the Rhine visit may have been we know not, for Mademoiselle Ida was by common report an extravagant and exacting lady—as witness some words from a letter of Pierre Foucher (Hugo's brother-in-law) to his sister, in which he speaks of "the *ménage* of the great Dumas and the little Ida, who is ruining her lover and would like to beat him into the bargain." However that may have been, there was as yet no lack of affection on the man's side, if we may judge by the lover-like verses which were prefixed to *L'Alchimiste*—a play written to please a particular whim of the actress.

"La petite Ida" has been celebrated also by Gautier's ornate pen[1]: "What shall I say of those hands? Adorable! That neck, white and swelling like a swan's! Shoulders—divine! Figure!"—and so on in the well known style. Her pleasing plumpness was, says he, the envy of half the women in Paris who suffered from the opposite quality.

Such was Ida Ferrier, who was soon to become Madame Alexandre Dumas. The marriage may or may not have been brought about by a strong hint from a high quarter, if it be true that one evening when Dumas had been reckless enough to take Mademoiselle to a ball given by the Duc d'Orléans, that Prince said: "I understand, my dear Dumas, that the lady you have presented to me is of course your wife." There is nothing whatever against this story except its source.[2] In any case the two were married in March 1840, the ceremony taking place in the Chapel of the Chamber of Peers, and being attended by Chateaubriand, Roger de Beauvoir, Nodier, and a number of distinguished people. The two first-named acted as *témoins*, and blessed the happy bride.[3] The Paris residence of Dumas and his wife was 22, Rue de Rivoli, but the greater part of their time together was spent in Italy. No children were born to them, and the union was not permanent: the best of their married life had come before the marriage. The knot once tied, the sense of restraint once imposed, incom-

[1] *Les Belles Femmes de Paris.*

[2] Eugène de Mirecourt, *Les Contemporains* (vol. 49).

[3] Roger de Beauvoir used to quiz Chateaubriand on his loyalty to the departed Bourbons, telling him that his blessings were always reserved for *ce qui tomba*. On this occasion after blessing Mademoiselle Ida, *qui avait des choses considérables à mettre dans son corset*, Chateaubriand turned to Beauvoir and said, "You see my destiny is still the same, and even at this moment *tout ce que je bénis tombe.*" (The anecdote is given in *Mes Souvenirs*, by Gustave Claudin.)

patibility became more marked, and ended, after four years, in a separation by mutual consent. Dumas would let a mistress bully him, but not a wife. And so Madame having retired from the stage, lived in Italy—chiefly at Florence—receiving an annual allowance of £240 from her husband until her death, which occurred in 1859 at Pisa. But the separation was quite friendly: the unsatisfactory husband was courtly enough as a ladies' man, and recommended his wife to the French Ambassador at Florence in a letter of the utmost amiability, which ran thus:

"DEAR AMBASSADOR,—Here is Madame Dumas, who is as constant to you as your eternal spring. She returns to Florence to ask a welcome already so graciously extended to her on previous occasions. Use your good offices on her behalf this time as you have done before, and some fine morning I shall look in myself to grasp your hand and thank you.

"With best respects,

"A. DUMAS."

As a pleasant method of shunting a wife this is unrivalled.

On the subject of the conjugal relations of this pair and their rupture we have some remarks from the lady, well known in literature as "La Comtesse Dash." She says:[1] "A woman with tact enough to shut her eyes to his pranks, to make his home agreeable to him, and especially not to disturb him in his work—such an one might have been perpetually happy with him. . . . She should have humoured his love of mystery and intrigue, she should have always been on the point of discovering things and yet never have discovered them, and above all she should never have indulged in any scene of jealousy."

[1] *Portraits Contemporains* (Jacques Reynaud).

With all due deference to "Madame la Comtesse," we fancy that her imagination has evolved a woman more than mortal.

Dumas might have found an example in his friend the Duc d'Orléans, whose short married life was of the happiest. Calling on the Prince in January 1841, he was shown the young Comte de Paris, then a child of three years, whose father, referring to the Duchess, said, "Ah! I have been fortunate; I drew a prize in the lottery."

"I hope," Dumas observed, "that it may be long before your son becomes a king."

"You are right," replied the Duke, "kingship is a sorry trade."

"I did not mean that, my lord; I meant that he could only become king by the death of his father."

It was fated that neither father nor son should reign: one year later the Duke died from the effects of a carriage accident. Dumas happened then (1842) to be in Florence, and he had gone to the Villa de Quarto to dine with Prince Jerome Bonaparte, with whose son—the afterwards well-known "Plon-plon"—he was intimate. There he first heard news of the sad event, and was filled with grief so poignant that he could only find relief in letters of ecstatic sympathy to various members of the Royal family. Much of this—especially as it was made public—does not accord with our ideas of good taste; but it must be estimated by the temperament of the writer and of his countrymen:[1] "for the poet," says he, "is like a bell: to every blow that strikes him he must resound: at every grief he must utter his moan: that is his way of prayer."

[1] Villemessant (*Mémoires d'un Journaliste*) says that he remembers Dumas' article in *Le Siècle* on this subject. He read it while he was in his bath, and wept so copiously that he almost made the bath overflow!

Having learned the date of the funeral, Dumas, leaving Florence on July 27 and travelling day and night, reached Paris on the morning of August 3, and after attending the ceremony in Notre Dame proceeded to Dreux, where the interment took place. He recalls the fact that it was exactly four years since he had buried his mother, and that these two events remained the greatest sorrows of his life. From one of the doctors he received the *serviette* on which the Duke's head had rested after the accident, and retained it—among the few things he did retain in his constant *déménagements*—as a memento of a friend about whom he wrote: "In the fourteen years during which I had the honour of knowing him I had on different occasions asked from him alms for the poor, liberty for prisoners, life for men condemned to death, and not once had I been refused."

The Duke's death interrupted a work undertaken at his request on the history of the French army, which only proceeded as far as three regiments, and was understood to have been compiled by Pascal, Dumas' secretary. He himself had plenty else on hand. In the intervals of writing dramas and travelling about he found time to produce a variety of more or less solid work. Most important is the picture of the troubled reign of Charles VI, published in 1836 as *Isabelle de Bavière*, whether we regard it as the first of a series of historical "studies,"[1] to be continued off and on for the next thirty years, or whether—considering the episodical story of the Sire du Giac (an adaptation of *Lénore*) —we prefer to call it an introductory essay in historical "romance." As it happened, Dumas' first explicit experiment in this latter kind was made not on French history but on that of ancient Rome. *Caligula* had set him on that track, and to it we owe the novel of *Acté* (1839)—a very

[1] See classification in Bibliography.

"documented" but yet very imaginative excursion into the reign of Nero, and worth reading as an example of what intrepid genius could accomplish in a field traversed already by Chateaubriand and afterwards to be adorned by Renan. In this same year an astonished world read a wonderful account of a "Fortnight in Sinai" (*Quinze Jours au Sinai*), being an authentic narrative of a recent expedition made by Baron Taylor and a scientific party, of which Dumas was not a member. This accident did not prevent him from writing—with the help of notes and sketches supplied by the artist Dauzats,[1] who accompanied the expedition—two most interesting and accurate volumes in which, as critics observed, the writer, not being able to say anything about himself, said for once a good deal about the country. Dumas smiled, and was proud to think that—as Mehemet Ali declared—he had revealed Egypt to the Egyptians.

Passing over with simple mention some works of the compilation order, such as *Napoléon, Jehanne la Pucelle, La Comtesse de Salisbury, Les Stuarts*—in which we find again the popular historian of *Isabelle de Bavière*—we notice for different reasons some other productions of this time. First, *Le Capitaine Paul* (1838), based on Cooper's *The Pilot*, and written by Dumas from suggestions of Dauzats; *Acté* (1839), to which we have already referred; *Les Crimes Célèbres* (1839–1841), a work of large collaboration, in which Dumas was helped by four others, among whom were Fiorentino and Mallefille; *Jacques Ortis* (1839), which is simply (as the preface by Fiorentino states) a translation of Ugo Foscolo's *Jacobo Ortis; Aventures de John Davys* (1840), for the most

[1] The first edition was described by MM. Alexandre Dumas and A. Dauzats. In the copy presented to Baron Taylor Dumas wrote: "I send you these two volumes which I have written; Dauzats *invenit*."

part "lifted" from *La Revue Britannique ; Le Maître d'Armes* (1840), developed from an account, given to Dumas by the fencing-master Grisier, of some episodes in Russia during the conspiracy of 1825 against the Emperor Nicholas ; *La Chasse au Chastre*, suggested by a story told to the author by his friend Méry.

What does this manifold activity signify? Clearly, an horizon wider now than that of the dramatist or the historian. Already Dumas,—for his ideas are vast—sees the fair-spreading domain of fiction which he will exploit. Whence the material comes he will not care: original or borrowed matters little, so long as it is readable or capable of being made so: contributions are not invited, but they will be levied. A grand conception truly, with something of the king about it, and something of the brigand! Into what particular channel this energy shall be directed circumstances will soon decide.

For the moment Dumas is occupied by another idea, which has come to him from the success of *Mademoiselle de Belleisle*. He would like to become one of the "Immortal Forty"—an ambition which every man of letters in France has at some time felt, and few have disavowed until the grapes became sour.

"Mention me for the Academy in your *Revue*," he writes to Buloz, "and ask yourself how it can be that I am not among the candidates when A. (? Ancelot) comes forward."

Again, at the beginning of 1841, he writes to Nodier, "What sort of a chance do you think I should have just now for the Academy? Hugo, you see, has just got in, and Hugo's friends are for the most part mine also. Think of this at your next meeting, and sound Casimir Delavigne, who takes some interest in me. . . ."

Next year, when starting for Italy, he has a word to say

on the same subject to Baron Taylor: "Don't forget about the Academy: stir up Nodier, Barante, and Molé: they are, I imagine, the three persons you can influence most. If my presence is desirable, one word from you will bring me back."

But the word was not forthcoming, and Dumas, as he returned to Florence, said, "I want to be *le quarantième*, but it seems that they intend to make me do *quarantaine*."

One further effort he made, on the death of Casimir Delavigne in 1843, by which event two vacancies were created—a seat in the Academy and the post of librarian in the Bibliothèque de Fontainebleau. The latter Dumas thought would be a nice berth for his son, and tried unsuccessfully to obtain it for him: the Academical *fauteuil* he coveted for himself. But people talked, and things were said in the papers, annoyed by which he wrote this injudicious letter to the editor of *Le Siècle*:

"DEAR SIR,—As several papers have stated that I had sought and obtained the post of librarian at Fontainebleau, I shall be much obliged if you will contradict this news, which has no foundation. If I had desired either of the chairs left vacant by the illustrious author of *Les Messéniennes*, it would have been only his chair at the Academy."

A hint so ruinously broad as this was bound to spoil any slight chance he might have had. Delavigne's place was filled by the election of Sainte-Beuve, and Dumas was destined—like many another distinguished man—to remain the occupant of the "forty-first *fauteuil*," though it was long before he could reconcile himself to that position. An Academician indeed! On the score of genius and achievement he had every claim. But—as we foreigners have often to be reminded—the French Academy is a club with some-

what strict conditions of membership, and to these Dumas hardly conformed. It was not only that he represented revolutionary ideas in literature, nor that he was essentially a "popular" author and one whose fertility was already looked upon askance—though neither of these facts recommended him. Personal considerations weighed still more against one who had no certain banking account, who was indiscreet in word and deed and undignified in demeanour, one in short who—with his Mélanies and Idas too much in evidence and too much talked about—lacked that outward respectability which is the chief of all Academic qualifications. Objections on this score did not grow less as time went on, nor was Dumas, whose candidature went no further than "nibbling," ever afterwards so eligible as in the year 1843. His friends, Nodier and Taylor, had no doubt done their best; Buloz, however, whose *Revue des Deux Mondes* had already become a power, was but a lukewarm supporter. The coolness thus caused between him and his old contributor soon grew into an open feud, when Buloz was appointed *Commissaire du Roi* of the Théâtre Français and in that capacity came into constant collision with Dumas about the terms and conditions on which his plays were to be produced.[1] Hence one of those few "ferocious hatreds," which Villemessant says that Dumas indulged in, against the man whom he described as the "founder of wearisome literature"—wearisome, we presume, *after* 1836, when the relations of Alexandre Dumas with the *Revue* ceased. But even the ferocity was tempered with humour. Having vowed that every letter he wrote for a year should contain something disparaging to M. Buloz, Dumas, in his efforts to fulfil this vow, once wrote

[1] The letters of Dumas on this subject were published in a newspaper, *La Democratie Pacifique*, at the end of 1844.

from Havre to a friend and dated his letter: "Havre, 170 kilomètres from that *imbécile de Buloz*"!

The mention of Buloz suggests a greater man whose antipathy was no secret. The writer of *La Comédie humaine* and the writer of—let us say—*La Comédie historique*, as both of them un-Academical persons, might have had the common ground of brothers in misfortune. But Balzac was credited with a vast contempt for Dumas, whom he called "the negro," and whose dramas he professed to regard as clap-trap appeals to the gallery. In *Les Guêpes*—a medium of impartially distributed stings—Alphonse Karr, after recording the fact that "M. Dumas on his return from Florence (1841) has, to the surprise of everybody, brought back no fresh decoration this time," goes on to declare that a mutual friend had brought Balzac and Dumas together at an evening party. Not a word did either speak to the other, until Balzac, when departing, said as he passed Dumas, "When I can do nothing else I shall take to writing plays." "Begin at once then," was the prompt reply. *Exit* Balzac. Was this, perchance, the party in regard to which Dumas made his well known remark when asked by a friend how he had enjoyed it—"I should have been dreadfully dull without myself"?

In any case he was well able to hold his own wherever it was a question of repartee. At the Français one evening during the performance of a play by Soumet, a spectator was observed to be slumbering. "Look," said Dumas to the author, who was sitting near him, "you see the effect produced by your tragedy!" But next evening at the same theatre it happened that the play was one of Dumas' own, and it happened also that a gentleman in the stalls was overpowered by sleep. Soumet being present noticed this, and with infinite satisfaction, tapping Dumas on the shoulder

and pointing to the offender, he said, " Please notice, my dear Dumas, that your plays can send people to sleep as well as mine."

" Not at all," was the ready answer ; " that's our friend of yesterday ; he has not woke up yet ! "

Comparing social life at this time with what it was in his early Paris days, Dumas noticed with regret two tendencies. One was the decline of supper parties as an institution. Even in theatrical circles these convivial sequels to the play were losing their glory : still more in general society, where dinners, with less freedom and informality, had superseded them. The other change displeasing to him was the growing habit of smoking. Not only did he not smoke himself but he disliked the smell of tobacco, and avoided it as far as possible. Moreover he regarded nicotine as a stupefying drug—the enemy of *esprit*, and its use as an anti-social practice which interposed a barrier between the sexes ; so that often after dinner, when the gentlemen lit their cigars, he would desert them for the salon and the ladies. Paris, however—its salons, theatres and boulevards—formed only a small half of Dumas' interests. A vagrant by nature he was always on the move, and his movements were as swift as his repartees. No one has come nearer to solving in his own person the problem of perpetual motion.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT NOVELS

(1843–1853)

DUMAS in the inventiveness of his plays, Dumas in his eager appetite for history, Dumas in his pleasant stories of travel—these we have seen. Combine the three, not forgetting the wondrous imagination which underlies them all—the dramatist, the historian, the *conteur*—and we have the qualities of Dumas as the writer of historical romance. For some while past he has cherished the idea of popularizing French history: he has dipped into it on different occasions, and each dip has convinced him that the subject was worth pursuing further. Did any one say that French history was dull? Perish the thought! The historians may have been dull, but that was their own stupid fault. Scotch history would doubtless have been liable to the same reproach had there been no Sir Walter Scott, and who would say that the annals of France were less eventful than those of Scotland? Nay, the opposite was being proved at this very time by Michelet, by Hugo, by De Vigny, by Mérimée. Pass over the first as an "historian" proper—romantic and picturesque, but still a professional historian: did not *Notre Dame*, *Cinq Mars*, and *Charles IX* attest the influence and value of the Waverley novels? Yet none of these three had really touched the popular level. Hugo had divagated into poetry and archae-



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A CARICATURE BY ETIENNE CARJAT IN "DIOGÈNE."

ology, the spirit of De Vigny's work was essentially aristocratic, Mérimée had produced a gem of exquisite art—a joy for ever to *connoisseurs*, too delicate for the general. For true popularity something on a larger scale was wanted, laid on with a thicker brush and in colours more vivid. For that business Dumas was the man, and the only man. His was the genius which could produce "the dramatic romance"—that form of novel which Victor Hugo dreamed of as forming "one long drama, divided into scenes, in which the descriptive parts serve as do the costumes and scenery of a theatrical piece." And just as in the theatre there is a *décorateur* whose function it is to see to the costumes and scenery, so in the dramatic romance—and more so as the affair is of greater length—it will be desirable to have a man for this purpose. By good fortune Dumas had lighted on the man—a student of history, an unwearied rummager of documents, whose name was Auguste Maquet. Originally a lecturer at the Collège Charlemagne, and for the last five or six years a writer—under the pseudonym of "Macqueat"—of stories and verses, Maquet's first association with his great partner arose from some help which Dumas had given to his drama *Bathilde* (1839), and it was this acquaintance which brought about the first of the great novels. For Maquet had written a short one-volume story called *Jean Buvat* dealing with the Cellamare conspiracy against the Regent Duc d'Orléans. Having tried in vain to place this story he brought it to Dumas, who took the little thing, expanded it into a long romance, named it *Le Chevalier d'Harmental*, and readily secured for it the *feuilleton* space of *Le Siècle*—at the same time paying Maquet twelve hundred francs for his share instead of the modest one hundred he had originally tried in vain to get. So began this most notable of literary partnerships. To catalogue the

works which it produced in their order of publication would be merely to show that the popularization of French history did not proceed on a regular and progressive plan, but was effected bit by bit, the first often coming last and the last first, until at the end a sequence—not indeed of years but of epochs—found itself established, stretching from the reign of Charles IX to the French Revolution. Thus, after *Le Chevalier d'Harmental* (1843) Dumas went back to Louis XIII and wrote *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (1844) and its first sequel, *Vingt ans après* (1845). Then returning to the Regency period we have *Une Fille de Régent* (1845) to supplement *Le Chevalier d'Harmental*, after which we hark back to the reign of Charles IX in *La Reine Margot* and its continuation, *La Dame de Monsoreau*. Between this and its sequel, *Les Quarante-Cinq* (1848) come in two of the Revolution novels, *Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge* and *Joseph Balsamo* (1846), and so on. To us, however, it matters little in what order the slides of the magic lantern were originally made: we prefer to see them as a whole and as a series. To do this we may begin even a little earlier than the Saint Bartholomew.[1] For that exciting and terrible time *Les Deux Dianes* and *Le Page du Duc de Savoie*[2] serve as a gentle preparation. The date is 1550, and the reign is that of Henri II, over whom the fair Diana of Poitiers still holds sway. Through all the fighting of that time—the loss of St. Quentin and the gain of Calais—we follow in one story

[1] The beginning must be fixed more or less arbitrarily in order to gain the best point for sequence of view. Otherwise it would be possible to start further back. *Le Bâtard de Manléon* concerns the reigns of John II and Charles V; the reign of Charles VI is treated in *Isabelle de Bavière*; that of Francis I in the semi-historic *Ascanio*.

[2] In regard to these two companion books it should be stated that Maquet had no part in either; the first of them was, according to Parran, mainly the work of Paul Meurice;

the love of the young Comte de Montgomery (afterwards the famous defender of Domfront) for Diane de Castro, daughter of the King and Diane de Poitiers; in the other the devotion of Emanuel Philibert to his mistress Léona, who passes to all the world as his page Léone. Thus we come to the Treaty of Cateau Cambrésis, the death of King Henry mortally wounded in tournament by Montgomery, and the accession of François II. For the first time now Queen Catherine comes to the front. Hitherto, as the sovereign's wife she has for long years effaced herself before imperious Diana and gruff Montmorency the Constable; now as the sovereign's mother she begins a long delayed vengeance for neglect. This first son, indeed, she loved but little: he is too much the slave of his girl wife, beautiful Marie Stuart, and Marie is wholly influenced by the Guises, with whom Catherine has not yet made common cause. And so when the sickly François lies dying, it is Catherine who—coveting the crown for a second son more pliable, and perhaps for a third more loved than either—will forbid the skill of Ambrose Paré to intervene lest haply the King's life might be prolonged: rather let nature take its course, and let his reign be short. To him succeeds Charles, ninth of that name; the Queen-mother's grasp grows stronger and the scope of her dark deeds wider. As a Catholic she hates the heretics, as a mother she fears most of all men their leader Henri de Navarre, whom she foresees as a rival to her beloved Henri d'Anjou. To compass the death of this Béarnais is her whole desire. The story of *La Reine Margot* is the story of the duel between these two. On the one side all the devices of murder—the secret assassin, the drugs of Réné the Florentine, the lip-salve for Madame de Sauve, whose lips Henri often touches, the poisoned page of the book which, missing its intended victim, kills the King's

favourite hound and more slowly the King himself. On the other side Henri of Navarre avoids the various snares, partly by his own shrewd opportunism—for when it is a question of " Mort, Messe, ou Bastille " he does not hesitate to profess himself a Catholic, just as on a famous future occasion he will declare that " Paris vaut bien une messe " ; partly by the help of his wife, Queen " Margot," who is a good friend to her husband—though they each have their own love affairs and have passed their honeymoon as far away from each other as possible ; and partly also by the good offices of his brother-in-law, King Charles, who—though for the most part a puppet in the hands of Catherine —asserts sometimes his right to be generous, and, while shooting through his window at the wretched Huguenots, keeps his kinsman beside him out of harm's way. Others were not so fortunate. The romantic La Mole—lover of Queen Margaret—and the jovial Coconnas had fraternized at their first meeting when they entered Paris on the eve of St. Bartholomew ; then they fought each other desperately, as in duty bound, since the one was a Huguenot and the other a Catholic ; finally they became bosom friends again, and both perished together—victims of that same dire Catherine.

" Le roi est mort ! Vive le roi ! " The throne of Charles IX is now occupied by his brother Henri III, summoned from Poland by courier after courier. The Queen-mother has failed to kill Henri of Navarre, but she has managed to postpone his reign and make him fly for his life. The new King, who oscillates between debauchery and superstition with occasional fits of Satanic kingliness, has enemies enough—his treacherous brother d'Anjou, the ambitious Henri de Guise, and the crafty Cardinal. His " minions " can amuse him and are good enough to fight with d'Anjou's

" Gentlemen " ; but how would he fare without Chicot the Jester, wisest of fools, who baffles the conspirators at every turn—personating the King, hiding in the confessional-box, making brother Gorenflot drunk, preaching sermons, signing abdications, and what not ? Wamba was nothing to him. As for the Dame de Monsoreau it is enough for us that she was loved by that brave Bussy d'Amboise, whose regrettable murder—brought about by the jealousy of his master d'Anjou—alone prevented him from adding d'Épernon to the many victims of his valour. D'Épernon, however, lives to form the Gascon body-guard of Henri III, known as " Les Quarante-Cinq " : and former personages reappear in new shapes. Now it is the Duchesse de Montpensier, sister of Guise, masquerading as a page-boy to help her brother : now it is Chicot, who for having trounced Mayenne has had to go into hiding for some years till we refind him in Robert Briquet—faithful as ever to his King, and a good friend also to Henri of Navarre, whom he accompanies to the siege of Cahors. A wonderful picture this siege gives of the future Henri IV, physically a coward and trembling with fear, yet by sheer force of will leading the attack as bravest of the brave. There are other battles and sieges too, notably that of Antwerp, which Anjou conducted while the fleet under Joyeuse gave help. Little glory did French arms gain there, nor was Anjou more successful in love than in war. For returning to France he fell in with Diane de Monsoreau, who had loved Bussy and had never forgiven the Duke for his death. Seeking now to entrap her he prepared retribution for himself. It was the old story—the laboratory, a little " aqua tofana," a mysterious illness, and farewell Duke of Anjou ! With this *Les Quarante-Cinq* ends, and the Valois period of French history is done with. Before the curtain rises again forty years

elapsed,[1] which cover the reign of Henri IV and the early part of Louis XIII. Obviously such an interval invites reflection and discussion on what has passed. The majority of readers are quite content: some few will be troubled by the pangs of the historical conscience; one will even go so far as to write a book to prove the "Historical Inaccuracies in *La Dame de Monsoreau*." This poor man is much to be pitied, for he has begun a work which will never end. Let us rather grant at once to the author of dramatic historical romance the privilege of regulating facts and marshalling them for effect. Otherwise how can he realize that famous ideal which Dumas set before himself of "elevating history to the dignity of romance"? "Inaccuracies," then, or "elevations"—many such may be discovered: as a type one will suffice. History informs us that, between the death of Charles IX and the arrival of his brother Henri from Poland, some three or four months passed. But *La Reine Margot* teaches us better by showing how Catherine just secures the succession for her favourite son by bringing him back at the dramatic moment before Charles has yet quite ceased to breathe—an arrangement which every one will admit to be more effective. *Ex uno disce omnes*: yet these, and some "extra-historical" incidents, are but the acknowledged licences of fiction, with which none but a pedant will quarrel. The more important question is, What impression of the main characters and events of French history will these romances leave on a reader who knows French history only through them? Will such an one on the whole see right? Doubtless, yes. About the course

[1] So far as Dumas is concerned, Maquet's two novels, *La Belle Gabrielle* and *La Maison du Baigneur* to some extent fill this gap. Dumas himself treated the period later on in his studies of Henri IV and Louis XIII.

of religious strife, of domestic intrigue, of foreign policy, he will gather little which serious history would have him unlearn. And as to the persons of the drama, admit that their characters are modelled on the traditional and popular view; it is always possible that this view, formed at or near the time itself, may be the truest. Dumas, of course, adopted it naturally and unconsciously as being the most suitable for his purpose: even had he been aware of another it is inconceivable that he would have hesitated between —let us say—a white-washed Catherine de Medicis, a passive instrument of Spanish policy, and the masterful woman of scheme and intrigue, spell and poison: the one was so colourless, the other so lurid. To name the Queen-mother is to name the strongest instance of a possible perversion of truth. Others are less questionable. Charles IX, Henri III, Henri IV—what historian can amend the characters of these kings as they are presented by the novelist, or what historian can draw their characters with more distinctness? And if any one wants to see how Dumas had advanced in historical knowledge since the days when he wrote *Henri III et sa Cour*, let him compare the Duc de Guise of that drama with the Duc de Guise of the Valois novels. Human nature, as Plato long ago observed, has been coined in very small pieces; and the sorting of these, to form a just estimate of character, involves so much balancing and counterbalancing that it ends in being perplexing without being any the more infallible. For Dumas it has to be said that whenever he touches history—in novels, plays, or studies—he has the true historical instinct; without either faculty or inclination for the drudgery of analysis he somehow arrives at a synthesis quite as convincing as any that can be reached by the most minute methods.

When the curtain rises again it is on a scene very different

from that of the decadent Valois house. The gloom of secret stratagems and snares has been dispersed : a brighter and more buoyant air is felt at once, when on a morning of 1625—Louis XIII being King and Cardinal Richelieu his minister—a certain young Gascon appears in the township of Meung on a wonderful orange-coloured pony, which excited the jeers of Rochefort and gave the newcomer a first opportunity of showing his metal. To his sword also D'Artagnan owed his introduction to Athos, Porthos and Aramis, the three musketeers, who henceforth are four. "Queen's musketeers" really rather than "King's," since it is on them that Anne of Austria depends to protect her love for Buckingham from the hostile schemes of Richelieu, especially in that affair of the diamond studs, which—as Madame Bonacieux revealed—the Queen of France had given to her English lover. Hence the desperate journey to England undertaken by the four heroes with their four lackeys, when by one misadventure or another the rest drop out, and on D'Artagnan and his man Planchet rests the whole burden of saving the Queen's honour. How that was accomplished is a matter of history—or at any rate of romance. We know that D'Artagnan won his race against time and that the Queen was able to wear her diamonds when the King led her forth to open the ball at the Hôtel de Ville. We know also how Richelieu had vainly employed on this business the beautiful criminal "Milady," as he employed her again more successfully to bring about that "miracle for the salvation of France" which was wrought at Portsmouth by the dagger of Felton. For these reasons and for others of a more private nature the brotherhood had vowed a righteous vengeance against Milady, performed with due ceremony by the executioner of Bethune.

Not however to this sombre ending nor to the general unpleasantness of "Miladyism" does the story of the Musketeers owe its popularity. Rather it was the loyal comradeship of these seventeenth-century gallants, their reckless fighting, their impetuous love-making, which typified to the French public certain characteristics identified with France in her greatest days. Athos for dignity, Porthos for strength, Aramis for subtlety, D'Artagnan for wit and resourcefulness, all for a courage to which other virtue is quite secondary—such qualities fascinate readers of all nationalities, whether in the way of similarity or of contrast. It is not a question here of historical persons —they are less problematical, and the chief of them, Richelieu, is excellently drawn in his day of power—but rather of catching the spirit of a particular epoch; and this by common consent Dumas has done most admirably. Nor does any book illustrate better his power of assimilating material and improving upon it than the story of the Musketeers. The substance of the whole is to be found in the *Mémoires d'Artagnan* by Courtils de Sandras. There we have D'Artagnan and his three friends, as also Milady (lady-in-waiting to Queen Henrietta), de Vardes, Rochefort (called Rosnay), Madame Bonacieux and her spouse, the rivalry of the King's Musketeers with those of the Cardinal, and much else. The life of D'Artagnan himself represents three phases of character. At first he is the quarrel-seeking adventurer, swaggering in wine-shops, gambling in the ante-chambers of the King, leading wives astray and beating husbands. Then under Mazarin during the Fronde period he becomes more attached to intrigue both in love and in politics, and he is entrusted with confidential missions to England, where he spends much time. Later on, when Louis XIV has assumed power and the splendours of the Court have begun,

D'Artagnan, now Capitaine-lieutenant of the Musketeers, appears as a punctilious and particular *gentilhomme*, most anxious to forget the wildness of his early fights and amours, He died in 1673, killed during the siege of Maestricht. Thus one may read in Courtils de Sandras,[1] from whose voluminous memoirs—without excluding other authorities of the same sort[2]—ransacked by himself or Maquet, Dumas borrowed freely, and at the same time discreetly. Over all he sprinkled the salt of his own wit: much he imagined and invented—such as the entertaining characters of Grimaud, Mousqueton, Bazin, and Planchet, or the details of the journey to Calais: some things he altered—ante-dating, e.g., by several years the birth of D'Artagnan, which seems really to belong to 1623, so that the young man could hardly have come from Béarn in 1625 except in the arms of his nurse: other things he suppressed if they were either discreditable to his heroes, gross in themselves, or likely to offend modern readers.[3] Dumas' intent is ever to glorify France and to bring out all that is most attractive in the French character. And here it may be noted, in passing, that of the two really detestable women in all his novels neither is French—Catherine de Medicis an Italian, Milady an English woman.

The historical landmark which ends *Les Trois Mousquetaires* is the murder of Buckingham (1629). When the story

[1] Or in the more handy and corrected abridgment, *D'Artagnan*, by Eugéne d'Auriac. Paris, 1846.

[2] Such as the *Memoirs of* La Porte, of Tallemant des Réaux, and of Madame de la Fayette. A useful collection of all such documents, by Petitot, had recently been published (1829).

[3] One of D'Artagnan's dealings with Milady might better perhaps have been omitted for this reason. Was it, one wonders, from squeamishness or from a patriotic dislike to see his hero worsted by the Englishwoman, that Dumas did not quote a certain letter attributed to Milady by Madame de la Fayette which was reported to run as follows: "(Elle lui répondit) que son nez l'incommoderait trop dans son lit, pour qu'il lui fût possible d'y demeurer ensemble"?

is resumed, after an interval of eighteen years, Louis XIII and his great Minister are dead ; and France, groaning under the taxation of crafty and avaricious Mazarin, is divided into two parties, the Cardinalists and the Frondists. Among others whom Mazarin imprisoned was the Duc de Beaufort, grandson of Henri IV and Gabrielle d'Estrées : the escape of this nobleman—by the help of a certain colossal pie, which concealed beneath its crust daggers and rope ladder—is the subject of several diverting pages. This, however, is incidental : the proper continuance of the first story belongs not to anti-Mazarin movements—D'Artagnan indeed is nominally in the Cardinal's service—but to the fortunes of the Musketeers in England, where by chance they found themselves, at first on different sides—since Athos and Aramis fought for King Charles, while the other two were agents from Mazarin to Cromwell ; but soon all made common cause as loyal gentlemen to save the King. A noble though vain struggle, involving many desperate dealings with Milady's son, Mordaunt, who sought to avenge his mother's death, and after coming often near success perished at last in the waters, hurled down by the hand of Athos. Thus history, public and private, pursues its course, though—as is sometimes the way of sequels—*Vingt ans après* has not the charm of twenty years before.

It was often wondered what that last word of King Charles on the scaffold meant, " Remember," until Dumas found its meaning in an injunction to Athos that he should discover and use, when the proper time came, a treasure hidden in the vaults of Newcastle keep. Athos—or the Comte de La Fère, to be correct—did not forget ; and having gone in 1660 to Newcastle he was negotiating with General Monk when D'Artagnan and his followers, disguised as fishermen, kidnapped the General, and having conveyed

him in their smack over to Holland presented him to the exiled Charles II, by whose graciousness he was deeply impressed. All which things explain, in a way ignored by the generality of historians, the reason why Monk took so important a share in the Restoration.

So in 1660 begins the story of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, Raoul, the son of Athos, a youth full of valour and promise, but short-lived and ill-fated. For, loving Louise de la Vallière, he came into rivalry with his royal master, whom Louise loved more; and so, broken-hearted, he left the King's service and went into a far country, where, fighting bravely, he perished; which calamity being announced, Athos, long distressed by his son's sorrow and by their separation, himself faded out of life. Thus the eldest of the Musketeers departed. And what of the others? Aramis, now General of the Jesuits, had renounced the sword for the cassock, after which, we remember, he had always hankered. In this capacity he must needs concern himself with a plot in favour of that luckless twin brother of Louis XIV who was languishing in the Bastille: the plot failed—though for one short day the King and the prisoner of the Bastille changed places—and the dangerous twin was secretly conveyed away to the Île Sainte Marguerite, to be known henceforth only as "the man in the iron mask." For these reasons, Aramis, as sharing in the treason of Fouquet, was to be seized: and with Aramis was involved Porthos, the innocent tool of his clever friend—Porthos, who helped to fortify Belleisle, picking up big boulders and flinging them about like pebbles—Porthos, who with less of boisterous swagger now than in early days, remained still the *bon enfant*, the good-natured giant, slow of wit, large of heart, cheerfully working for others without troubling to understand what it was all about. Never did more repugnant duty fall to D'Artagnan than

when, as Captain of the King's Musketeers, he was sent to arrest his friends at Belleisle. By every means he sought to warn and save them, but a higher power and the secret orders of Colbert baffled his loyalty. Fate, it seems, had decreed that Porthos should die. See, then, this Titan driven to bay in his cavern, while he beats off his foes time after time and hurls at them that huge barrel of gunpowder, which exploding devastates all around. Amid the wreckage Porthos stands, holding off by strength of arm the granite masses which press upon him, until failing at last beneath the incumbent weight—" too heavy—too heavy ! "—he falls buried in the ruin his own hands have wrought. How D'Artagnan afterwards died gloriously in battle has been already said : for Aramis—or Monsieur d'Herblay, about whom we care little—he recovered favour and found in diplomacy a suitable sphere for his special gifts. But the book is the book of Porthos—Porthos into whom Dumas put most of himself and of his father, and whose death he declared had stricken him with a heavy sorrow. The modern reader may draw back aghast at the six volumes of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, but he will have missed the best part of the Musketeer cycle should he fail to read those pages which describe the end of Porthos—true epic pages such as Homer's self had not disowned.

The later part of the reign of Louis XIV is not dealt with by any novel of Dumas.[1] Again there is an interval of forty years before we come to the date of the two Regency romances, *Le Chevalier d'Harmental* and *Une Fille du Régent*. These are very similar in setting and in incident. Both revolve round plots formed against the Regent Duc d'Orléans ; in both we see much of the " ape-like face " of Dubois, who

[1] Maquet however wrote *Le Comte de Lavernie* as a connecting link between *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* and *Le Chevalier d'Harmental*.

scratches his nose while pondering, prowls about Paris in all disguises, and tracks down every sort of conspirator: in both the Regent figures, as a man of pleasure indeed, whose *petits soupers* and other nocturnal amusements receive full attention, but as essentially merciful and generous, pardoning where Dubois was anxious to punish. The historical pivot of *Le Chevalier d'Harmental* is the Cellamare conspiracy of 1718 got up by the Spanish Ambassador and the Duchesse de Maine for the purpose of kidnapping the Regent in the interests of Philip of Spain; and the Chevalier, who has a private grudge against Orléans, is used by these people as their instrument. Similarly in the second story —which was suggested by an incident in the first—Hélène de Chaverny, a daughter of the Regent, is loved by a young Breton nobleman who has pledged himself to take her father's life—the relationship of course being unknown. The Regent, disguised as a Spanish duke, talks with the young man, for whom he has taken a great liking, and tries to dissuade him from so dangerous a design: meanwhile Dubois, with a bag of gold pieces on the table, interrogates the valet, and by the process of adding or taking away ten louis for each answer—according as it is valuable or not—soon succeeds in extracting all the information he requires. In both stories the reader is introduced to the interior of the Bastille, where M. de Launay presides and where various distinguished inmates are living as the guests of the State, for the most part pleasurably enough and with every kind of ingenious contrivance for communicating with one another. On the whole we are moving now in a more subtle and deceptive world: things are less often what they seem: love, less eager to satisfy itself at the moment, has become more elegant and artificial; hatred, more long-headed, marks down an enemy for distant vengeance rather than for im-

mediate chastisement. It is a changed atmosphere since the days of the Musketeers, and no one runs any risk of confusing the seventeenth century with the eighteenth.

With the Regent's death in 1723 the reign of Louis XV, properly speaking, began: its history may be filled in from all the recognized authorities.[1] For the purpose of romance the chief interest belongs to its closing years, which form a sort of explanatory prologue to the Great Revolution. In 1770, then, the *Mémoires d'un Médecin* series opens with the five volumes called *Joseph Balsamo*, chiefly concerned with the doings of that remarkable impostor—the "arch-quack" of Carlyle's pages. The phenomena of occultism had always fascinated Dumas: he dabbled, at different times, in palmistry, phrenology, clairvoyance, spiritualism; especially he was attracted by that form of mesmeric development which is nowadays called hypnotism. To test the reality of this power he made several experiments[2] at the time when

[1] Dumas himself has treated it in other works not professedly "romances," e.g. *Louis XV et sa Cour*, and the *Mémoires d'une Aveugle* (Madame du Deffand), with its sequel, *Les Confessions de la Marquise*; also in his novel *Olympe de Clèves*, which might be called (like *Ascanio*) semi-historical, since—though the story of the actress-heroine is fictitious—a great many historical figures come in—Louis XV, Cardinal Fleury, Marshal Richelieu, etc.

[2] Here is a characteristic one: "I was travelling in Burgundy in 1848 with my daughter. In the same carriage with us there happened to be a very charming lady of thirty or so. It was eleven o'clock at night, and in the course of conversation this lady mentioned that she had never in her life been able to sleep while travelling in a coach. I made no remark, but exercised my will upon her, and ten minutes later not only was she asleep but her head was resting on my shoulder. I then woke her up: she was equally astonished at having fallen asleep and at the position she had chosen in doing so."

There is no end to the *bonnes fortunes*—real or imaginary—of Dumas. *À propos* of his hypnotic powers he once told a story (according to an article of reminiscences in *La Nouvelle Revue* of August, 1899) about a certain Lady H., over whom his magnetic influence was so extraordinary that, on merely thinking how much

he was writing *Joseph Balsamo*, and with considerable success, though he admits that the subjects he operated on were always persons peculiarly liable to such influence—young girls or impressionable women. The conclusion he arrived at was this: "I believe that by the help of magnetism a bad man might do much harm, I doubt that a good man could do much good. . . . I consider that magnetism is an amusement but not yet a science." In the story of *Joseph Balsamo* the possibilities of magnetism are stretched to the uttermost demands of fiction. The "arch-quack" is seen with all his quackeries; only, he is a quack who believes in himself and in his mission to regenerate humanity by breaking up the existing order of things. As the head of a widespread society of Nihilists, whose motto is L.P.D. (lilia pedibus destrue), he directs the undermining of society's foundations: he pulls the strings with which the puppets are made to dance. As a showman he introduces to us, in one way or another, some famous people—Jean Jacques for example, and the querulous Thérèse (Rousseau by the way will have nothing to do with Balsamo, preferring to trust to the gentler process of time); a certain young surgeon called Marat, who is all for prompt and violent methods; the young Austrian princess just come to France to be the bride of the shy studious dauphin, who is more interested in the mechanism of clocks than in any affairs of Court; Madame Dubarry, with her pet negro Zamore and all her intrigues to keep her position; that eminent churchman, Cardinal de Rohan, whose eyes are dazzled by

he would like to see her, he presently observed her entering his room attracted by the suggestion. The rest of the story reads better in French. "Elle semblait endormie. En galant homme je la reconduisis chez elle, trois nuits de suite, en lui faisant remarquer que tout a une fin. Et, ma foi! quand elle vint pour la quatrième, je ne la reconduisis plus!"

the sight of Balsamo making gold. Here too a beginning is made with the romantic story of Andrée de Taverney and her brother Philippe, when the one becomes a lady-in-waiting to the new Dauphiness and the other at first sight of Marie Antoinette conceives for her that devoted love which will last until she falls beneath the axe of the guillotine. But Dumas knows that there are flaws in magnetism; and so Balsamo, whose power depends mainly on the information supplied by the clairvoyance of his wife Lorenza Feliciani, comes near to an early and ignominious ending. For that lady when she has escaped from his influence goes off and betrays the secrets of the association to the Government, with the result that several of the conspirators are arrested and Balsamo himself only escapes by the help of Dubarry. Gloom, mystery, and a sense of impending cataclysm are the intended impressions of the book, which ends with the death of Louis XV in 1774.

Ten years later Balsamo, reappearing as the Comte de Cagliostro, resumed more openly his campaign against Royalty. He it was who engineered all that affair of the diamond necklace, using as his principal instruments Jeanne de la Motte, Cardinal de Rohan, and a certain Nicole Légay, whose marvellous resemblance to Marie Antoinette gave opportunity for employing her in affairs which would damage the reputation of the Queen. Many men there were who loved Marie Antoinette; none more than Philippe de Taverney, for whom she did not care at all, and the Comte de Charny, whom in her cold, proud way she loved. It was about her that these two friends quarrelled and fought, and it was to save her from the King's displeasure that Charny was made to marry Andrée de Taverney. But the scandal of the necklace—which after all the poor Queen had enjoyed for so short a while—was sedulously spread abroad by the

Comte de Provence and other enemies, nor was it abated by the arrest of Rohan and Cagliostro, and the public whipping of La Motte.

Then we plunge straight into the Revolution. The *Ange Pitou*—who gives his name to the story and whose early life is partly a reproduction of Dumas' own boyish days—is not in himself a person of any consequence; but having come from Villers-Cotterets to Paris he found himself, July 14, 1789, engaged in the storming of the Bastille. Thence, among other rescued prisoners, came the *médecin* whose memoirs we are supposed to be reading, and whose ward Ange Pitou was. This Dr. Gilbert, a disciple of Balsamo and imprisoned for publishing revolutionary ideas, having now got himself appointed one of the Court physicians, did his best—as a moderate reformer—to advise the King and Queen for their welfare. But events moved too fast for advice—those well known events which no fiction can enhance—the rending in pieces of Foulon and Berthier, suspected of "cornering" bread; the arrival of the Flanders regiment at Versailles and the fatal banquet at which the tricolour was trodden under foot; the march of the hungry women from Paris, and the hurried journey of La Fayette to protect the palace from plunder and the sovereign from outrage.

More minutely *La Comtesse de Charny* describes all the efforts made to save Royalty by the sound sense of Gilbert, the self-sacrifice of Favras, the genius of Mirabeau. Everything is frustrated by the vacillation of the King and the obstinacy of the Queen, who is always *l'Autrichienne*, always distrusts the French, and looks to the foreigner for help. If omens could save the hapless woman she had been saved—the candles which go out one by one as she sits at the red-baize-covered table, the shuddering memory of a distant but unforgotten vision which passes over her as

she sees the King absorbed in drawing improved designs for Dr. Guillotin's newly invented machine. And meanwhile her enemies gain strength. Barnave impeaches Mirabeau; Robespierre's sad sallow face begins to dominate the Jacobin Club; D'Aiguillon and Marat hover about—Marat with his "yellow lips, flat nose, viper-like eyes, veins of mingled blood and poison." Whatever plans the Royal party form or unform, Balsamo-Cagliostro-Zanoni knows them all, his spies being present everywhere; and when the story ends, the King and Queen, arrested at Varennes and brought back on that "journey of sorrow" to Paris, have lost their last hope of freedom.

To end the Revolution series comes *Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge*, which opens finely thus: "C'était pendant la soirée du 10 Mars, 1793. Dix heures venaient de tinter à Notre Dame, et chaque heure, se detachant l'une après l'autre, comme un oiseau nocturne élancé d'un nid de bronze, s'était envolée triste, monotone et vibrante." The time is just before the fall of the Gironde. The King has perished; the Queen a prisoner, first in the Temple and then in the Conciergerie, awaits the same doom. To save her while there is yet time many schemes are on foot, at bottom of them all being the Chevalier de Maison Rouge, whom, as Philippe de Taverney, brother of Andrée de Charny, we have met before. To communicate with Marie Antoinette by means of a note wrapped in a carnation and to effect her escape by the opening of an underground passage, was the plan on which the Chevalier and his partner, citizen Dixmer, staked their last hope; that failing, Maison Rouge flung himself beneath the scaffold and by a self-inflicted death avoided surviving the Queen to whom he had given his life. But the name of the book does not imply its whole, or even its chief, interest. Besides the Chevalier and

Dixmer, there is Dixmer's wife, Géneviève; and Maurice her republican lover; and above all Lorin, the friend of Maurice—and the best type of a Revolution patriot—gay, witty, generous, and faithful, who voluntarily joins his friends in the Salle des Morts that he may share their fate, and dies making an epigram and paying a compliment to Sanson.[1] The Chevalier himself—with his disguises, his escapes, and his plots—might well seem the creation of lawless fancy did not we know that his original was a real person. He was not of course the Count Fersen we hear of in history, nor was he such an ideal of chivalry as Dumas makes him to be; but he was a certain audacious and rather disreputable adventurer called Rougeville who—as his recently published history shows[2]—lived between 1761 and 1814, when he was shot by order of Napoleon as a spy and a traitor. On whatever documents the novel was based, the treatment of this character is not only an illustration of the old proverb about truth being stranger than fiction—for the adventures of the real Chevalier were quite as improbable as those of the imaginary—but also an example, not less remarkable than that afforded by the *Mémoires de D'Artagnan*, of the wonderful way in which Dumas could improve upon any material that fell into his hands.

About the writing of this book an anecdote is recorded by Blaze de Bury. Dumas often declared that, when once he had mapped out in his mind the scheme of a novel or a play the work was practically accomplished, since the mere writing of it presented no difficulty, and could be performed

[1] In the novel Lorin dies with Maurice and Géneviève; in the play, by way of a happier ending, he secures their escape and remains to forfeit his own life.

[2] *Le vrai Chevalier de Maison Rouge*, A. D. J. Gonzze de Rougeville, d'après des documents inédits, par G. Lenôtre (Paris, 1894).

as fast as the pen could travel. Some one begged leave to dispute this assertion, and the result was a wager. Dumas had at that time in his head the plan of the *Chevalier de Maison Rouge*, of which he had not yet written a word, and he now made a bet of one hundred *louis* with his sceptical friend that he would write the first volume of the novel in seventy-two hours (including the time for meals and sleep). The volume was to be formed by seventy-five large foolscap pages, each page containing forty-five lines and each line fifty letters. In sixty-six hours Dumas had done the work —3,375 lines—in his fair flowing hand, disfigured by no erasions—and the bet was won with six hours to spare.

Yet no one surely would say that the *Chevalier de Maison Rouge* bears any marks of haste or inconsiderateness. On the contrary, it is, beyond doubt, the best of the Revolution novels, and not far from the best of all the novels. On closing it some retrospect and comparison is inevitable.[1] As a series these later romances fit not so well together as the earlier, nor individually do they hold so high a place in popular esteem. There are weak points. The juggleries of Joseph Balsamo, however thrilling in themselves, are a feeble peg on which to hang the French Revolution, seeming indeed but a trivial burlesque of dire realities; and this fact becomes clearer as the series advances. The peg gives way, and fiction has to glide—as in *Ange Pitou* and *La Comtesse de Charny*—more and more into a chronicle of facts. But the theory that Dumas had some special sense of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which he lacked when

[1] We do not take account here of three later-written novels dealing with French history subsequent to the Revolution: *Les Compagnons de Jéhu*, and its sister book, *Les Blancs et les Bleus* (covering 1793–1800), and *Les Louves de Machecoul* (temp. 1832). Though these books are of considerable size, they can hardly otherwise be classed as "great novels."

dealing with comparatively recent history is purely fanciful, and is falsified directly we get to the *Chevalier de Maison Rouge*, from which the Balsamo incubus has disappeared. Here the romance of history and its dignity are equally consulted. The Marie Antoinette of the preceding books —faithfully described by a pen which erred neither in being too sentimental nor too ungenerous—was not a lovable person: the Marie Antoinette of this last story, now in the extremity of fate, is treated with all the sympathy and respect which her womanhood, her rank, and her misfortune demand. The Republican Dumas will have nothing to do with "Madame Veto" or "Veuve Capet" or any other scurrility of the *sansculottes*: the woman we see in the prison and on the scaffold is still Marie Antoinette, Queen of France and daughter of kings.

To extol the *Chevalier de Maison Rouge* is not to belittle the romances of the Valois or Bourbon period—least of all that brilliant *épopée* of D'Artagnan and his friends. But the Musketeer books—while admirably adapted for continuity and for that "linked sweetness long drawn out" which the *feuilleton* requires—have also, it must be admitted, the defects of continuity. For one thing, inequalities are more marked: over so long a course good Homer has more chances of nodding—and nodding is infectious. For another, there is an absence of that finality which the mind of man craves for, even in fiction: there is indeed, except for the fate of all mortal things, no natural or necessary reason why these stories should ever end. To postulate a continuation is, artistically, a sign of weakness. *Les Trois Mousquetaires* does not perhaps demand a sequel, but it certainly invites one. It had better therefore be disengaged at once and set on its own pedestal, there to remain as a masterpiece, plausible in history, in imagination immense.

For the rest, if it is permitted to assume that excellence, whether in a novel or a play (and remember that in Dumas the two are very close together) consists in a reasonable size, in compactness, in self-sufficiency, together with concentred interest, crisp and unflagging action, unity of movement towards an end—if this be admitted, then, flanking that first pedestal, two others must be set up—certainly no smaller in stature ; and on the one must be placed *La Reine Margot*, on the other *Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge*. Whosoever bows before these will have done homage to the three greatest among the historical novels of Dumas.

Having now covered in some fashion or other so wide a stretch of ground—having traversed without halt fifteen thousand pages of fiction and a period of time close on two hundred and fifty years—one would gladly rest and be thankful. Dumas does not allow it. " When I write ' finis ' to one book," says he cheerfully, " it just means that I am beginning another." There are novels and novels. In giving precedence to those which we call " great " the epithet has been presumed as proper to the ones mentioned, whether considered in their conception or their extent or their fame : it is not meant to signify an arbitrary barrier or to exclude the preferences of individual taste. Other romances, to say nothing of dramas and historical works, were appearing during the same years and in the same way—first as newspaper serials, then in book form. Without degenerating at this place into a catalogue we may give a passing word to one or two of these. In 1844 came *Ascanio* (a story chiefly concerned with Benvenuto Cellini), *Fernande*, and *Amaury* (modern and non-historical). The publication of the latter in *La Presse* was interrupted for a reason of interest as illustrating an unusual and pathetic connexion between fiction aud real life. The heroine of the story

was a girl dying of consumption, and Mademoiselle de Noailles, who happened also to be suffering from this fatal malady, was so vitally interested in following the fate of the imaginary patient as to aggravate her own dangerous condition. Therefore *Amaury*, on the request of M. de Noailles, was broken off, and was not resumed until after his daughter's death. It may be added—as showing how realistically Dumas utilized all his experience—that the phthisical symptoms traced minutely in the story were the result of observations made by him many years before during an illness of Felix Déviolaine, his cousin.

Les Frères Corses (1845) is a story well known, at any rate from its dramatized form, in this country. So also perhaps is *Le Bâtard de Mauléon* (1846),[1] the scene of which is chiefly Spain and the time the fourteenth century. Mauléon is supposed to meet old Froissart and to tell him his tale, "which," adds the author, "I have drawn from a *manuscrit inédit*" —one, no doubt, of those many unpublished MSS. which Dumas kept in his head and paraded for his own amusement and the tantalization of the ultra-inquisitive. It is a regular Froissart chronicle of the days of chivalry, having for its principal characters the Black Prince, Bertrand du Guesclin, Pedro of Navarre, and other warriors. There is also—but this has nothing to do with Froissart—a certain dog called "Allan," belonging to Don Frederick, the brother of Pedro the Cruel, "a slim wiry dog of the sierra, with a head pointed like that of a bear, piercing lynx-like eyes, legs fine and nervous as those of a deer." Now this beast was a portrait of Dumas' own dog "Mouton"—outwardly be it understood; for in moral qualities "Allan" was superior to his prototype, as was proved before long. About the ante-

[1] *Le Bâtard de Mauléon* was refused by the manager of *La Presse* and appeared in *Le Commerce*.

cedents of Mouton there had always been some mystery, and the friend from whom the dog came, parrying all questions, had contented himself with this advice: "Try first to attach him to you, and you will then see what he can do." The story of that attachment belongs to the book of *Mes Bêtes*, wherein we read that Mouton was a surly, unsociable brute, unresponsive to any attentions of his master, and such a terror to the neighbourhood that a request was made by the Mayor of Saint-Germain that he should not be taken abroad except on a chain. One day Dumas was writing that chapter of *Le Bâtard de Mauléon* which describes how the dog Allan, to protect Don Frederick, flew at the throat of a hostile Moor: in the distance Mouton was uprooting dahlias and paid no attention when commanded to desist. "Very well, you rascal," said Dumas, "just wait till I have finished this sentence!" The sentence having been written, Mouton received a vigorous kick, whereupon his true character appeared, and his "attachment" became a painful reality; for he turned and sprang on his master, who had just time to hold up both arms in self-defence, with the result that the dog's teeth closed on the right hand and munched it, until with the left he was gradually choked off. Then the misnamed Mouton was conducted back to his original owner, and Dumas, after a week's doctoring of his hand, resumed with difficulty *Le Bâtard de Mauléon*.

It would be inexcusable in the eyes of many to pass over without honourable mention that pretty romance which tells how the godson of Cornelius de Witt reared, amid much tribulation, the precious bulb which gained the prize at Haarlem. *La Tulipe Noire* (1850), if not a great novel, is a charming story; and memory retains easily its few, though vivid figures—William the Silent, Boxtel, Gryphus, his

daughter, and the gentle Van Baerle, whose love is divided between Rosa and his tulips, until the two are reconciled in the "Tulipa Nigra Rosa Barlaeensis."

And there is yet one book—little known, little read—which enlightens, more than any other, that strange craving for the immeasurable and the impossible by which Dumas was always haunted. "What next?" was his eternal thought, as though he had hitherto touched only the fringe.

"Do the history of the world," said his son, not without irony.

"I have thought of that," was the reply quite serious; "but the objection is that you must either adhere to Biblical tradition, which only goes back some six or seven thousand years—and that would be too short; or else you must follow science—and that would be too long."

Eventually, however, he discovered a frame capable of holding some such gigantic picture as he desired to make. That frame was the old theme of the Wandering Jew, whose name—as it is given in French tradition—served as the title of the story. *Isaac Laquedem* (1853) is nothing but a fragment—a mere paltry two volumes out of a projected dozen, for it was stopped by the Censorship, and Dumas never resumed it again. But even as a fragment it is astounding. We see, first, the wanderer arriving in Rome in 1419 and joining himself to those pilgrims whose feet the Pope, by old custom, was wont to wash on Holy Thursday in each year. When it comes to his turn—he is the thirteenth—the Unknown falls at the Pontiff's knees, shows the brand upon his forehead, reveals himself as the accursed one who—for having refused the Christ bending under the Cross a moment's rest—had been condemned henceforth to wander through all countries and all ages, and finally begs the Holy Father to intercede for his pardon. This starting point

having been established, the story plunges back into the remote past, traversing ancient Egypt, India, Persia, Greece, and Rome, comprising also Moses and the Prophets and the Old Testament history of the Jews, until it arrives at the New Testament and paraphrases the Gospel narrative with the miracles and sufferings of Christ—all in the most approved *feuilleton* style. It was as well, perhaps, that the Government should intervene to prevent the sacred drama of the Passion from being presented to the Parisian public in the same style as the story of the Musketeers, since the thing was bound to move scoffing in some and pain in others. But there is no doubting the good faith of Dumas himself: irreverence and inexpediency were as far from his view as the opposite qualities they connote. In all sincerity he had set himself to explain and adorn the mysteries of religion for the benefit of the man in the street; and this ingenuousness of treatment is only less astonishing than the magnitude of conception. What the future course of *Isaac Laquedem* would have been is but guess work. It is said—and is likely enough—that the author meant to have represented the Pope as securing for the criminal a conditional pardon—the condition being that he should still wander, but henceforth as the apostle of good, not of evil. In that case we can see how, after the interview with Paul II, the story would have started off again with the wide vista of the modern world before it, affording opportunities without end for the activity of the regenerate Jew. As it stands *Isaac Laquedem* is an inchoate epic of the human race, which can only be criticized by large marks of exclamation.

Marks of exclamation indeed punctuated Dumas all through his life. Sometimes they assumed a practical and hostile form. It was while these novels, greater and smaller, were appearing that an agitation was set on foot for the

total abolition of Dumas. Ten years before he had been taken to task for appropriating in his plays the ideas and situations of other authors—mostly departed—whose reproachful spirits had been championed by Cassagnac. On this occasion the "ghosts" were not of the dead but of the living. Whence, it was asked, came this marvellous fertility of production—this output (some one had counted) of sixty volumes in one year? One gentleman in particular considered the thing a scandal, and being a dealer in scandals naturally took it up. This was "Eugène de Mirecourt," whose native name was Jacquot, less euphonious but quite adequate to its owner. With noble indignation he stigmatized as *mercantilisme littéraire* this wholesale production of books under the name of an eminent man who employed paid assistants to do the greater part of the work for him. Jacquot, it may be said, was not the first to start this quarry, for it had been done two years before (1842), rather cleverly, by one Louis de Loménie:[1] but Jacquot raised it to the dignity of a high literary question by bringing it before the Société des Gens de Lettres, and denouncing it as an imposture on the public, an injury to the assistants, who were merely paid like shop-hands but remained without name or fame, and finally as an outrage on the honour of literature. This was all very fine. But, as to the first point, the public did not care; as to the second, the assistants—or "secretaries," as they preferred to call themselves—worked under no compulsion and were at liberty to go away and make an independent name for themselves whenever and wherever they liked; while as to the dignity of literature, collaboration without naming was—whether good or bad—too common a practice in France for the Société to do anything but pass

[1] *Galerie des Contemporains Illustrés* (vol. v.).

a vague resolution in favour of regulating it more definitely. Then Jacquot, discarding the cloak of literary and ethical purism, resorted to the more congenial sphere of personalities; and having invented an excellent catchpenny title he launched (1845) the pamphlet *Fabrique de Romans: Maison Alexandre Dumas et Cie.*, spicy enough to meet with a ready sale and libellous enough to incur a fortnight's imprisonment for its author. To refer to this *brochure* is the mere duty of the chronicler: it has in itself no importance, and neither then nor since has influenced any reputable critic.[1] For the measure of Jacquot's revelations was soon taken when he proceeded to biographize the celebrities of the day (*Les Contemporains*) at sixpence per head including the portrait, and fell foul of so many that he was constantly being fined or imprisoned, until from an amusement he came to be regarded as a nuisance and at last sought refuge from his various troubles within the walls of a monastery, where he died.[2] Peace however to his ashes! So far as Dumas is concerned, he occasionally happened to say what was true in regard to collaborations: his personal anecdotes —inspired it was believed, by resentment at failure to become one of the great man's "secretaries"—may be

[1] With the exception of Quérard, who was sometimes misled, and whose rash conjectures—for they are nothing more—on Dumas are the chief blot on his otherwise excellent bibliographical labours.

[2] Whoever wants to see the quality of "Eugéne de Mirecourt" as a biographer should consult the *brochure* called *Confession d'un Biographe*, by Mazerolle, who describes the way in which these so-called biographies were compiled. The man who objected to Dumas' "manufactory" kept up an extensive one himself, and employed a number of assistants who were sent about Paris to pick up gossip and scandal concerning the subject of the biography whether in private houses or on the boulevard and in the café. *Rien n'était sacré pour un—Jacquot.*

allowed to have a certain negative value, since, in the absence of other evidence, they afford a fair presumption to the contrary. All this is not to say that Dumas' collaborative methods require no comment, but only to bar at the outset that form of comment which assumes him to have been an impostor, incapable of writing anything good himself, and indebted for all his successes to the brains of others. Apart from this absurd contention, which none of the men who worked with him ever put forward even in times of discontent and open quarrel, there are certain points proper for consideration. To avoid confusion, it is necessary in the first place to exclude altogether those jobbing "operations" to which Dumas —especially in his later years—lent himself, and which belong to the category of "trafficking" not of collaboration. It was his nature to magnify and expand whatever he touched, and he probably persuaded himself that there might be an "extra-collaborative" just as there was an "extra-historic." Convinced that he was a focus from which all the rays of literature emanated, and that his sign-manual did in some magic way conduct his brain, he set his name to some books in which his own share was little or nothing, just as he wrote miscellaneous prefaces or lifted whole passages from other authors with a few introductory words of his own. He forgot—as he was reminded on a celebrated occasion [1]—that "there are degrees": the appreciation of degrees was his weakest point. These things—done sometimes to oblige a friend

[1] In the Beauvallon trial at Rouen in 1846, when Dumas appeared as a witness, and being asked by the President what his profession was, said, "Dramatic author I should describe myself were I not in the country of Corneille." To which the judge's well known reply was, "Il y a des degrés."

sometimes from the pressing need of money—must be regarded as disfiguring excrescences on the normal and legitimate form of collaboration. Ultimately, if the whole truth were known, they would resolve themselves into a sort of debtor and creditor account where the balance would be in Dumas' favour; he gave as freely and inconsiderately as he took, and while some of the publications bearing his name had little to do with him, it is equally certain that a great number appearing under other names were essentially his work.[1]

So much for the "extra-collaborative" department. Return now to legitimate collaboration: with it alone we are concerned in all the principal works of Dumas —those on which his reputation depends, and which come within the view of the ordinary reader. Such an one, if asked, "What do you think of the collaborators of Dumas?" would probably reply "I don't think about them at all:" And the answer would be conclusive. Still, there is no need to shirk the question. Maison Dumas et Cie.—why not? The fact, if not this way of putting it, was common enough in Paris at that time. It was brought about by the insistence of editors, publishers, and theatrical managers upon having some well known name with which to attract the public: and—all sophistry apart—the only difference between a commercial and a literary undertaking was that in the former the firm might bear

[1] A good example of this is given by Alfred Asseline (in the *Indépendance Belge* of November 20, 1870), where he tells how when writing his novel *L'Enlèvement d'Hélène* he found himself in a difficulty and went to Dumas for help. The "master" sat down and wrote the whole chapter for him—it was a description of a duel—to such good effect that when the story appeared every one praised the excellence of this chapter. "Needless to say," adds Asseline, "that Dumas never gave a hint to any one of what he had done, and generously left me to enjoy all the credit."

the name of one who took no active part in it, whereas in the latter honesty demanded that the name on the cover of the book should indicate a real and a chief share in the work. To this condition the collaboration of Dumas conforms—that wonderful infusion of himself into others which, so far from belittling the man, has only in the course of time intensified the greatness of his individuality and power. Single-handed he might be as in *Henri III* or *Antony*, or many-handed as in the host of other works: it is only the conditions of authorship that are changed, not the person of the author. Faith divines this conclusion: curiosity would like to know how the thing was done. The various forms of collaboration may be reduced to two main classes, according to the nature of the principal partner's share. The first class includes those cases in which the subject of a play or a novel was brought to Dumas in an impossible or an imperfect state. Typical examples of this sort have been referred to in *La Tour de Nesle*. *Mademoiselle de Belleisle*[1] and *Le Chevalier d'Harmental*, in all which Dumas completed what was inchoate, strengthened what was puny, vitalized what was moribund. Sometimes he did more: he even resuscitated what was dead, as by recasting a play which had been hissed off the stage into that remarkable drama of

[1] When Dumas had received from Brunswick the nucleus of *Mademoiselle de Belleisle* he let it lie for two or three years. Brunswick, despairing that anything would ever come of it, said to a friend: 'I wonder if I shall ever see that 300 francs Dumas promised me for my MS. I wish you would go and ask for the money." The friend went, taking with him an order from Brunswick entitling him to receive 300 francs. Thus reminded, Dumas unearthed the MS., and taking the order, he added a cipher to the sum named, signed it and sent it back to Brunswick, authorizing him to receive from the Théâtre Français the first 3,000 francs of author's fees as soon as *Mademoiselle de Belleisle* should be produced.

his *Le Comte Hermann*. In all such cases where the book or the play would not otherwise have flourished, or perhaps even lived, who doubts that the giver of life is the real author? Sometimes, again, the suggestion from outside came in the course of conversation. In this way the novelist once had as a collaborator the learned Schlegel, who, meeting Dumas in 1838, told him from personal knowledge of certain events in the War of Liberation, which Dumas asked leave to make into a book and made into *Le Capitaine Richard*.

To the second category of collaboration belong those works in which Dumas was responsible for the subject, and in this class come all the books written in partnership with Maquet, except *Le Chevalier d'Harmental* and *Sylvandire*, the subjects of which Maquet suggested. In such cases, after discussing the plan with his partner, Dumas' habit was to draw up in outline a scheme of the whole, with the divisions and titles of chapters: then, when the assistant had filled in the outline, the MS. was handed to Dumas, who re-wrote it with such additions and alterations as he thought fit. The same course was followed in other books besides those written with Maquet. Edmond About has described [1] how he saw in 1858 at Marseilles the rough draft of *Les Compagnons de Jéhu* in which the master's original model had been developed by an assistant and which Dumas now took and wrote his romance from, elaborating it and *sémant l'esprit à pleines mains*."

This re-writing process resulted in such a prodigious amount of "Dumas" copy as to give rise to the legend that his "secretaries" had learned to imitate his hand-

[1] Speech at the inauguration of the Dumas Monument (November 4, 1883).

writing so closely as to baffle detection—a superfluous theory and in some instances demonstrably false.[1] The re-writing signified in reality Dumas' appetite for appropriation, and it was a special feature of those works in which his share was greatest. This method, of course, was subject to exceptions, for occasionally time failed. and then the MS. would be delivered to the printer just as it was written by the collaborator. The last chapters, for example, of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* were printed from Maquet's copy because the newspaper in which the story was being published could not wait for the revised version. And similar things became more frequent in later years.

To the many writers who in their different degrees shared or lightened the labours of Dumas we would gladly devote some pages did space permit, but it must suffice to have mentioned their names—in the Bibliography—in connexion with the books or plays to which they belong. Probably, next to Maquet, the most substantial helpers were Paul Bocage and Paul Lacroix.[2] The latter—otherwise known as the "Bibliophile Jacob"—was a cordial friend and admirer, who speaking of his former relations with Dumas said: "I used to dress his characters for him and locate them in the necessary surroundings, whether in Old Paris or in different parts of France at different periods. When he was, as often, in difficulties on some

[1] The only instance of a genuinely puzzling resemblance is the case of Viellot, a secretary who joined Dumas about 1850 and gradually fell into an almost exact imitation of the master's handwriting.

[2] The following are the works in which, according to M. Octave Uzanne, Paul Lacroix had most share: *Les Mariages du Père Olifus, La Femme au Collier de Velours, Olympe de Clèves, La Tulipe Noire, Isaac Laquedem.*

matter of archaeology, he used to send round one of his secretaries to me to demand, say, an accurate account of the appearance of the Louvre in the year 1600. . . . I used to revise his proofs, make corrections in historical points and sometimes write whole chapters." These words show pretty well the nature of the services rendered by Dumas' assistants—services which neither did they exaggerate nor did he either deny or depreciate. But Maquet stands on a different footing from the rest: they were casual and intermittent, he alone for ten years worked closely and continuously with Dumas, and he alone was in the full sense a *collaborateur*. When Dumas was in Paris, there also was Maquet: when Dumas travelled Maquet accompanied him; when Dumas established himself at Saint-Germain, Maquet took up his quarters close by at Bougival, and between the two a ceaseless stream of messengers came and went bearing copy. In the course of time this *fidus Achates* developed powers of invention and description which made him far more than the mere searcher-out of facts he was at the outset —made him, in fact, an independent author who could, if need were, carry on the business of historical romance for himself. Yet never till the breach between them came did he claim a position of equality, and the claim which he then put forward was based primarily on financial rather than on literary grounds. Bankruptcy is a terrible solvent of friendship; and when Maquet, to whom considerable arrears of salary were due, found himself in the position of an ordinary creditor and entitled only to twenty-five per cent. which the other creditors of Dumas had agreed to accept, it occurred to him that he might assert his right to be "joint-author" instead of mere collaborator, a right which would involve the appearance of his name

together with that of Dumas on the novels they had written together, and an equal share in any profits arising from these books. Twice the case came before the Courts, twice the opposing advocates thrashed it all out.[1] In both cases Maquet's claim was disallowed, though his share in the production of eighteen works was recognized, and with this barren honour he had to be content. The legal proceedings add nothing to what has already been said on the nature of the collaboration, but they leave us convinced of two things—first, that—as a matter of equity, Maquet ought to have been described as *co-auteur*, and secondly that—as a matter of literature—he was not the essential partner. Dumas without Maquet would have been Dumas: what would Maquet have been without Dumas? To illustrate this point more vividly, here is a little anecdote which, though it did not come out at the trial, is based on good authority. It concerns the story of *Ange-Pitou*—the last of their joint books. On this subject Maquet had been making researches at the library, and he came to Dumas with a mass of information about the hero, who was to be traced back to Louis Pithou, one of the authors of *La Satire Menippée*. "All right," said Dumas, "find out about him and let me have have the facts." Thereupon he made an agreement with *Le Constitutionnel* for the story, receiving—as was his wont—an instalment of the money in advance. As ill-luck would have it, a disagreement with Maquet—the beginning of their

[1] The *Gazette des Tribunaux* of January 20, 1858, and following days contains a long account of the proceedings. It appears that Maquet had, in 1848, made an agreement with Dumas by which he renounced all rights in their joint works in consideration of a payment of 145,000 francs. As only a small portion of this had hitherto been paid, the contention of Maquet's counsel was that the agreement was thereby invalidated; but the Court held otherwise.

quarrel—supervened. Dumas, bound by contract to supply *Le Constitutionnel*, had no time to look up the antecedents of Ange Pitou, and for that matter he did not know where to look. And so like a brave man he cut the difficulty by constructing a Pitou whose early years were passed in Villers-Cotterets and whose early experiences were those of Alexandre Dumas! So little in reality did he, except as a luxury, depend on the help of others. Not that Maquet must be for a moment disparaged: his own historical novels, written after the separation—*La Belle Gabrielle*, *La Maison du Baigneur*, *Le Comte de Lavernie*—are quite good, especially the first. If their authorship were unknown they might well pass for joint work; only in that case they would have to be classed as what Dumas used pleasantly to call "one of my inferior books." It would have been strange indeed if Maquet, after ten years' association with his master, had not learned all there was to learn about the writing of novels.

But, leaving aside these vain questions and all the "indiscretions of the tribunals," we do better to remember the generally excellent relations—cordiality on the one side, admiration on the other—which prevailed between Dumas and his assistants, as well as the perfect good humour with which he met the rather savage attempts made to deprive him of even any share in the authorship of his books. Every one has heard how, after he had delighted a gathering of friends for some while with his talk and wit, he ended by saying, "I must be off now, for if I stay here talking any longer it will be reported to-morrow that I had collaborators to help me."

At a club one day an admirer, after complimenting him warmly on his books, ventured to say that he had found a geographical error in one of them.

"Indeed! which was that?"

"*Le Chevalier d'Harmental.*"

"The devil!" said Dumas, "I have not read it. Let me see, who was it wrote that for me? why, that rascal Auguste. I'll comb his hair for him! (*je lui laverai la tête*).

Assuming the story as reported to be authentic, it only shows the unreasoning prejudice to which Dumas was exposed that this little joke at his partner's expense should have been construed into a scandalous admission.

When the meticulous Quérard asserted that one part of *Monte Cristo* was written by Fiorentino and the other by Maquet, Dumas, after establishing the facts of the case, added with gentle irony: "After all, it was so simple to believe that I had written it."

While hunting up, at Bourg-en-Bresse, some particulars about the fate of the highway robbers described in *Les Compagnons de Jéhu*, he called on a magistrate of the place—a local antiquarian of some repute and self-esteem. This gentleman, who had heard all about the Maison Dumas, saw the opportunity for a score. "And so, M. Dumas," said he, "you are going to write a novel this time *yourself*."

"Oh, yes," was the ready reply, "I got my valet do the last one, but as it was very successful the scoundrel demanded such an exhorbitant rise of wages that to my great regret I have had to part with him."

On all this subject the last word and the true word has

[1] This sort of anecdote is common enough. Oxford men may recall a story current some twenty-five years ago concerning the famous joint work of Liddell and Scott. The latter, it is known, died long before his partner; henceforth, whenever a mistake—more or less serious—was pointed out in the *Dictionary*, Liddell (it was said) would exclaim apologetically, "Ah! poor Scott!"

perhaps been spoken by Blaze de Bury, who knew more about it than most people: "Dumas in a way collaborated with every one. . . . From an anecdote he made a story, from a story he made a romance, from a romance he made a drama; and he never let an idea go until he had extracted from everything that it could yield him. Admit—as the critics will have it—his collaboration, plagiarism, imitation: he possessed himself what no one could give him; and this we know because we have seen what his assistants did when they were working on their own account and separately from him."

Ultimately there is one question to put—Did Dumas need collaborators? The answer is No and Yes. As a matter of talent he did not, as a matter of temperament he did. Just as his imagination was quickened by the sight of places, so the exercise of his mind was made more agreeable by the friction of other minds. His expansive, sympathetic nature sought always communication with his fellows; alone on a desert island he would, we fancy, have pined away, bored even by himself. Indeed he rather resented any reserve in those with whom he came in contact. "Why don't you become my collaborator instead of Maquet?" he said to his son: "it would bring you in a couple of thousand or so per year, and all you would have to do is to raise objections, criticize my proposals, and give me embryo subjects which I would work out without your help." [1] No wonder, then, that

[1] Dumas, however, in his *Souvenirs Dramatiques* (vol. ii.) allows some of the drawbacks of this system: "Of two collaborators one is generally a dupe, and that one is the man of talent. For your collaborator is like a passenger who has embarked on the same ship with you and who gradually reveals to you that he does not know how to swim; you have to keep him afloat when shipwreck comes —thereby running the risk of drowning yourself—and when you

Dumas not only wrote immensely himself but was the cause of writing in those around him. Thanks partly to the investigations of others, and chiefly to his own confessions, we are able to give chapter and verse in many facts which concern the production of his books. We know how he got this idea or that, we know how he was helped by one or by another, we know a number of like details. But why or how from such materials and with such help so grand an edifice was raised—that remains a mystery. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." It is the same with whatever is great and effective in Nature or in Art: explanations of the process never explain the result.

reach land he goes about everywhere declaring that without him you would have perished! . . . Often in a moment of weakness—either from good nature or because your self-love has been flattered—you consent to look at the MS. which some young author presses upon you; when once you have said 'yes' to him, you will have no more peace."



ALEXANDRE DUMAS—THE GIANT

FROM A CARICATURE BY H. MEYER.

CHAPTER IX

THE MONTE CRISTO EPOCH

(1843–1851)

ALL these books and literary questions form no real divergence from personal history, for there is no separating the man from the writer. It is a truism to say that Dumas lived and moved in the characters of his creation: it is equally true that the years of the great novels were the years in which he figured most largely before the eyes of his countrymen, alike as an amusing and amazing person, and as the source of whatever was most readable in the daily paper. Not only the author himself, but the fortunes of his heroes formed the commonest topic of conversation in *café*, club, and drawing-room. So far did illusion go that some were found to declare they had known the Abbé Faria in the flesh: Villemessant rousing his wife from sleep to tell her that Dantes had escaped from the Château d'If is only one example of a fascination unparalleled in the annals of fiction. Outside Paris, too, and beyond France, a wider public was now on familiar terms with the novelist, whose works were being imported in large cargoes and translated into every European language.[1] Significant in this light is

[1] E.g. *Los Mosqueteros de la Reina*—ὁ Κόμης τοῦ Μοντεχρίστου, etc., etc.

that book which remains to be added to the number of "the great novels."

The shackles of history lay lightly on Dumas, but still they did to some extent bind him: in *Le Comte de Monte Cristo* he was wholly free. July Revolutions, impressions of travel, historical romances—all these demanded that fancy should be more or less reconciled with fact: imagination, seeking now a wider indulgence, found it in this nineteenth-century version of *The Arabian Nights*. *Monte Cristo*, in a word, resumes and sublimates Dumas the *conteur*, and Edmond Dantès is the ideal Dumas. In some respects the ideal is close to the real. Type and anti-type, the one is an ardent lover, so is the other: the first with his jewels and fine clothes is not a little vain, so is the second; both have travelled the wide world over and read or learned about all things. Dantès has usurped the functions of Providence, Dumas is not averse from that *rôle*—a prophet if only the rulers would listen to him: Dantès has become a millionaire, Dumas was at one time on that way: Dantès flings his money broadcast, Dumas does likewise: Dantès discharges his debts and even those of others, Dumas—well, every analogy must break down somewhere. Mythical and fantastic as it all is, the element of modernity is quite distinct, amounting on a larger scale to that same antithesis between the commonplace and the abnormal which Soulié had already played with in the *Mémoires du Diable*, and Eugène Sue in *Atar-Gull*. Egoism—the exercise for good or ill of one's own power and caprice—is the foundation of the Count's character: he is a saner Antony, a less brutal Richard Darlington. Does he not also, energetic and unaging, personify that doctrine of persistent force about which science had so much just then to say? Above all, does he not symbolize that vast power of gold—massive gold in bar and bullion—which

dazzled the *bourgeois* mind of those days, and which has since then spread its fascination still higher? When Monte Cristo goes to the banker with an unlimited letter of credit, and the banker asks him if he considers a million a year enough, the Count's reply is:

"A million! Why, I generally carry that much about on me as pocket money!"—a remark so vulgar that no refined millionaire of to-day would dream of making it. And after all—wealth, success, triumph—where is happiness? Apparently this lord of creation can find it only in the hallucination which comes from hashish, so that he will ultimately be a supreme type of the vanity of life.

There is in fact no end to theorizing: better perhaps to read the story than to read into it the refinements of speculative analysis; and as every one has had that pleasure it may be well to add here the authentic origin of *Le Comte de Monte Cristo.*

To Dumas when at Florence in 1842 Jerome Bonaparte proposed a tour with his son Prince Napoleon, by way of occupying the young man, showing him Italy and increasing his general information. It was settled that they should first visit Elba, as an appropriate pilgrimage for the nephew of the great Emperor. Mentor and Telemachus reached Leghorn, where, finding no ships likely to sail for the present and having no desire to linger in that dullest of all towns, they hired a small open boat with a couple of rowers and set out to traverse sixty miles of sea by aid of oars and sail. For a while the wind was fair and all went well: it was an amusement to shoot the sea-gulls and pick them up as they floated on the surface. Then came a storm, and for three hours the cockleshell was tossed on the waves, and the passengers were drenched to the skin. One of them, the Prince, smoked cigars and was seasick; the other, Dumas, not

having the advantage of this distraction, contemplated the danger of swamping and kept up his spirits as best he could. "*Quid times? Cæsarem vehis!*" seemed an appropriate reflection. The weather abated, and next morning at 5 a.m. they made Porto-Ferrajo. When Elba had been thoroughly traversed the two went for a day's rabbit shooting to La Pianosa, and while thus engaged they discerned in the distance a rock of sugar-loaf shape standing out of the sea.

"Ah!" said the man who accompanied them, "that's where you would have got good sport. Yonder island is full of wild goats."

"Indeed! and what may its name be?"

"They call it the island of Monte Cristo."

Thus for the first time did the magic name fall on Dumas' ears.

Next day they started to explore this island, but when on the point of landing one of the boatmen cautioned them —which he had omitted to do before—that as Monte Cristo was uninhabited no boat was allowed to touch there under penalty of five or six days' quarantine at the next port of call. As the chance of shooting a few goats was not worth the subsequent detention, they decided not to land; but before departing Dumas persuaded his companion that they should row all round the island in order to establish its geographical position.

"What is the use of that?" said the Prince.

"Because," was the reply, "I intend in memory of this trip with you to give the name of *Monte Cristo* to some novel which I shall write later on."

So much then for the name. A few months later, having returned to Paris, Dumas made an agreement with a publishing firm for a book to be called *Impressions de voyage dans*

Paris, intending to write something in the style of his other travel books. But the publishers, remembering the great success of Eugène Sue's *Mystères de Paris*, urged that the book should be an exciting and sensational romance rather than a mere series of impressions. Dumas agreed, and casting about for what he wanted, recalled an anecdote called *Le Diamant et la Vengeance* which he had come across in Peuchet's *La Police Dévoilée*, and which supplied him with an intrigue for his story. The idea, as it first took shape, was that of a rich aristocrat known as Le Comte de Monte Cristo, who, living in Rome, meets and renders a great service to a young Frenchman visiting that city ; in return for which the Frenchman acts as guide to the Count when he comes to Paris—ostensibly as a visitor, but in reality to discover and punish enemies who had ill-treated and imprisoned him in his early years. The book was to begin with the adventures in Rome of Albert de Morcerf and Franz d'Épinay, and to continue with the Count's arrival and doings in Paris, while the history of his youth was to be brought in by way of narration. At this stage, when the Rome section had been now written, Maquet was consulted, and his advice was to develop the early part—Marseilles, Danglars, the Abbé Faria, and the Château d'If—as being the most interesting period in the hero's life. Dumas thought it over, and accepting this advice he divided the work into the three distinct parts we know—Marseilles, Rome, Paris. It will be noticed, therefore, that the most fascinating portion of *Monte Cristo*—at any rate to English readers—was, in the execution of the book, an afterthought tacked on to begin a story of which the middle and end had already been devised.

Another point of interest to those who like to know how books are written is suggested by *Monte Cristo*. It might

have been supposed that an author of Dumas' imaginative power would least of all men trouble about documentary research or local colour at first hand. But this was not so. He had in fact a passion for investigating the places with which his books were concerned. "I cannot," he said, "make either a novel or a play on localities I have not seen." And so, for *Monte Cristo*, not only the island itself but Marseilles and the Château d'If had to be revisited: *Les Trois Mousquetaires* involved going to Boulogne and Béthune: *La Route de Varennes* was preceded by a special journey to Varennes, where facts were collected concerning the flight of Louis XVI and his arrest at that place. The same practice had been followed in the earliest works: *Christine* was helped by a visit to Fontainebleau, *Henri III* by one to Blois. And there are many similar instances.

It was in 1843 that Dumas first went to live at Saint Germain, where he took the Villa Médicis at a rent of eighty pounds per annum, at the same time retaining his rooms in Paris. The effect upon Saint Germain of this new and lively resident demands a quotation from himself: "I carry with me wherever I go—I don't know how it is, but it is so—an atmosphere of life and stir which has become proverbial. I lived three years at Saint Germain, and the people of that respectable Sleepy Hollow no longer knew themselves. I imparted to the place a go and a liveliness which the inhabitants at first took for a sort of endemic and contagious fever. I bought the little theatre; and the best actors and actresses from Paris, coming down to supper with me, used often to perform one of my plays for the benefit of the poor. The hotel keeper had no rooms left; the livery stables ran out of horses; the railway company confessed to me one day an increase in their receipts of twenty thousand francs a year since I had come to live at Saint Germain!"

Very different was the case of Versailles, about which here is a good story—by Dumas, of course. Louis Philippe, it seems, had noticed the revival of Saint Germain—which, by the way, he attributed to himself; and being much exercised as to the dulness of Versailles consulted Montalivet on the best way of galvanizing that Royal suburb. "Well, sire," said Montalivet, "Dumas has a fortnight's confinement to do for National Guard duty; make him do it at Versailles." The King was so annoyed that he turned away from his favourite Minister, and did not speak to him again for a month.

While thus making things "hum" at Saint Germain, Dumas was diverting the world with the prolonged adventures of the Musketeers. Nor did he overlook the advantages of presenting these heroes on the stage; but, by way of a first experiment, he and Maquet put *Vingt ans après* into dramatic shape and had it performed at the Ambigu in the autumn of 1845, under the title of *Les Mousquetaires*. To one of the rehearsals of this play—the author being present with his son and a few other friends—an incident belongs which is typical alike of Dumas' quickness in measuring popular opinion and of his versatility in adapting himself to it. During the rehearsal of the first six tableaux a fireman had been noticed standing at the wings and following it all with rapt attention: in the course of the seventh tableau he disappeared. Dumas, calling his son's attention to the fact, went off to find the fireman, and asked him why he had gone away. "Because," said the man, "I didn't think the seventh scene so amusing as the others." This hint was sufficient. The author sent for the copy of the seventh tableau and tore it up; then, divesting himself of coat, waistcoat, and collar, he sat down in the manager's room and rewrote the scene straight away. "The fireman was

right," he said when they asked him what he was doing; "I see what is wanted." On the evening of the first performance, when the success of the play became evident by the applause of the house, Dumas contrived a pleasant surprise for Maquet, who with his family was present as a spectator, without any idea of getting the honours of authorship. Imagine, therefore, the good Maquet's delight when, at the fall of the curtain, Mélingue (who played D'Artagnan), acting on the instructions of Dumas, came forward and announced the authors as "MM. Alexandre Dumas et Auguste Maquet." "Maquet," says Dumas *fils*, "rushed into my father's box and embraced him, shedding tears of gratitude."

Among the audience on this occasion was the King's younger son, the Duc de Montpensier, who when it came to the execution of Charles I was observed to grow pale and turn away his eyes, so realistic was the scaffold scene. Dumas, equally prompt to take a hint from a Prince or a fireman, cut out that scene next day. In the course of the evening the Duke—with whom Dumas had hitherto no acquaintance in spite of his friendship with the elder brother—summoned the author to his box, and after congratulating him on the success asked why a play like *Les Mousquetaires* should be produced at a secondary theatre like the Ambigu Comique. "Because, your Highness," was the reply, "I have no theatre of my own, and to have such a theatre a Government licence is necessary." The Duke kept this in mind, and not long afterwards invited Dumas to the Tuileries and told him he might have his theatre. Hence that celebrated *Théâtre Historique*, which began now to be constructed on the site of the Hôtel Foulon, under the nominal management of M. Hostein; the object being, as Dumas put it, "that the people might be able to read every evening

a page of our history." This new theatre was to have been called the *Théâtre Montpensier*, but the King objected to his son being too closely mixed up in an uncertain enterprise, for "Princes are not allowed the excitements of bankruptcy." Dumas was under no such disability. Simultaneously with the beginning of the *Théâtre Historique* another foundation stone was being laid—destined both of them to rise into buildings of momentary splendour and ultimate disaster.

Life at the Villa Médicis was pleasant enough, but the attractions of Saint Germain and its distinguished resident were rather an encumbrance to work: people constantly were running down from Paris, and there was really not a quiet moment. Besides, the Villa Médicis was only rented, and Dumas would like a château of his own no less than a theatre. And so being convinced that he wanted a house both as a hermitage and as a possession, he was walking one day along the road when the desirable scene met his eye on a gently-rising hill which commanded in front the Seine, in the distance the forest of Vésinet. On the left was Saint Germain, on the right Marly-le-Roi—each place near enough for accessibility, far enough off to avoid the influx of the railway. Here—on a countryside beautiful itself, and rich with memories of kings and the mistresses of kings—a building site was advertised for sale. Dumas, having plenty of money just then, bought the ground, and sent for Durand the architect. "What I want," said he, "is a Renaissance château surrounded by an English park." Plans were discussed, figures calculated. The building itself, of modest dimensions—as distinct from the land around it—was at first estimated not to exceed two thousand pounds. Then it turned out that there was a difficulty about the foundations, caused by the slope of the ground and the number

of subterraneous springs. The architect pointed out these facts. "Never mind," said his employer, "you must dig—dig right down to the tufa—make arcades to support the cellars—make anything you like." Many things were necessary; a wall—never completed—to fence off the property from the high road; a main gateway, a lodge on each side of it, an avenue leading up from this to the house. And so, from first to last, it became a matter of twelve thousand pounds instead of two, and that amount would hardly cover all that was spent on fancy work without and artistic decoration within.

Thus, while the Château at Saint Germain was rising above ground, in Paris the *Théâtre Historique*, financed by a company in which Dumas was a large shareholder, was in construction; at the same time he himself was up to his eyes in fulfilling, or trying to overtake, engagements for the supply of fiction to various papers. Suddenly and unexpectedly he received an invitation to dinner from M. de Salvandy, the Minister of Public Instruction.

"I want you to do me a service," said the Minister after dinner. "Have you made your arrangements yet for the winter?"

"Arrangements!" quoth Dumas, "I never make any. I am like a bird on the branch of a tree: if there is no wind I stay there, if a wind comes I open my wings and go wherever it carries me."

"Suppose the wind were to carry you to Algeria—how would you like that?"

"Nothing better: I have always longed to see that country," and he recalled how he had been about to start for Algiers in 1830, when the July Revolution prevented him. M. de Salvandy then explained that he wanted the French public to know something of their African colony,

which could best be effected if a popular author like Dumas would write a book about it. He added that he proposed making a grant of £400 for the expenses of the expedition.

"Very good," said Dumas; "I should like to supplement that sum by another £1,600 of my own . . . yes . . . if I go to Algeria I go to represent France, and I must do credit to France."

"You will not be doing it economically," observed the other.

"Economically! really, my dear Minister, if you imagine that I practise economy, you must allow me to say that, for a Minister of Education, you are very imperfectly educated."

One condition, however, Dumas laid down: he must have a Government vessel put at his disposal—for himself and friends. This condition Salvandy with some demur accepted, and then asked:

"When can you start? I suppose you are pretty busy just now."

"Oh! as soon as you like. I shall have to sell some railway stock, which I can do in two or three hours; and I shall have to finish off a few novels, which I can do in a fortnight. Let us say, then, in a fortnight's time."

This being settled, Dumas happened to be dining next day at Vincennes with the Duc de Montpensier, who was on the eve of starting for Madrid to be married to the younger sister of Queen Isabella. The Duke, hearing of the arrangement made with Salvandy, thought it a capital idea, and said: "It would be still better if you were to take Spain on the way to Algiers; I should much like you to be present in Madrid at my marriage on October 12.

And so theatre, château, novels (*Joseph Balsamo* in particular) were left to look after themselves, while Dumas

and *suite*, having with difficulty found portmanteaux large enough for their luggage, started from Paris on October 3. The *suite* consisted of young Dumas Louis Boulanger the painter, Maquet, and a negro domestic whose rich native name of "Eau de Benzoin," had been commuted for plain "Paul." Quite different this expedition from those former travels in Switzerland, Italy, and Germany: Dumas was now no mere private person, but the guest of Royalty, and —as when La Fayette had sent him to La Vendée—an envoy with a mission, assumed by himself and acquiesced in by M. de Salvandy. This responsibility, if it increased his importance, did not lessen his enjoyment. After attending the wedding ceremony, he and his party, augmented now by Desbarolles the palmistry expert, and Giraud the artist, who happened to be in Madrid, visited the principal towns of Spain—Barcelona, Malaga, Cordova, Seville, and Cadiz. There were adventures of course, and misadventures. The prevailing difficulty was to get anything to eat, for the *posadas* were execrable and the *posaderos* disobliging. It was worse even than Italy: "There your food is bad, and the only good *restaurateurs* are French; in Spain you have no food at all, and the good *restaurateurs* are Italian!" Happily Dumas, as we know, was a first-rate cook: his regular proceeding at every inn they came to was to take possession of the kitchen and prepare a meal, one dish on which he especially prided himself being a salad of his own invention made with fresh eggs and lemons, without either oil or vinegar.

On the other hand there were compensations. In the large towns our *grand romancier* was received with enthusiasm. Theatrical managers sought his patronage; besides the bull-fights witnessed at Madrid, Montès the Matador promised in his honour a special performance at Seville,

which was however prevented by the heavy rain, "for these gentlemen (the matadors) are very particular about not wetting their feet." To make up for this disappointment the Comte d'Aguila organized a private bull-hunt by gentlemen on horseback—a very pretty sight. Then there was the dancing of the Andalusian girls, much appreciated of course. "What eyes! what feet! If I do not describe the feet of these lovely women, it is really because their feet can hardly be said to exist." In short the "poetry of motion" exhausted all the usual epithets. Anita, Pietra, Carmencita, and the rest—they were all anxious to see him: "It seemed just as if I were a Sultan entering his harem, *minus* the eunuchs." But when he ventured to kiss Anita's hand he found at once that he had violated Spanish etiquette, and that these ladies were of a *vertu féroce*. These words invite no inference; for Dumas and his friends, though in the land of Don Juan, boasted the strictest propriety, even when they visited at Cordova that interesting Maison de Sénèque, the present associations of which they found to be quite unconnected with the memory of the philosopher. Desbarolles indeed, the most respectable of the party, was observed to close his eyes during some of the dances, whether from modesty or from sleepiness; Alexandre (the younger) while ostensibly disdainful, had a curious habit of lagging behind the others, getting lost for a day or two, and causing much anxiety to his companions. We hear also of a certain compromising Julia, who . . . but let it be enough that in six weeks or so Dumas found he knew a good deal about Spain, that is, about the people and their ways, for, as usual, he left others to expatiate on the physical features of the country and on its works of art, on which subjects he is comparatively laconic.[1] Of his fellow-travellers it is

[1] By no means, however, equalling that traveller who, after see-

" Alexandre " who comes in for most notice in the account of this tour (*De Paris à Cadiz*)—Alexandre, who had just left college, and being still under the paternal wing, received improving advice. Here is what the father thought of him : " Alexandre, I may tell you, is a mixture of opposites—idle and active, lavish and thrifty, *blasé* and ingenuous ; he laughs at me with all his mind, and loves me with all his heart ; he is always ready to rob my cashbox like Valère, or to fight for me like the Cid . . . every now and then we have a row, and he leaves the shelter of my roof. On that day I buy a calf and fatten it, quite sure that before a month is over he will return to eat his share." Observe that the " prodigue " has not yet been transferred from son to father. Yet one little incident which occurred on the journey to Spain illustrates very well the difference of economic temperament between the two. At Bordeaux, as there was some delay or difficulty in hiring a carriage, Dumas impetuously bought one. " I paid," he says, " 1,300 francs for a vehicle worth 500—the coachmaker assuring me that I should be easily able to sell it at a profit in Spain ; Alexandre, on the other hand, purchased for five francs a knife which was certainly worth twenty-four." And yet we have heard that one day, after an *al fresco* luncheon, when the son was amusing himself by flinging stones at a couple of empty champagne bottles, the father flew into one of his passions at this wanton waste of material, forgetting how many champagne bottles he would probably expend that evening on the self-invited guests who dropped in to pick up a dinner. Was there ever such unwise wisdom as that proverb about taking care of the pence and letting the pounds take care of themselves ?

ing the Alhambra, wrote in the visitors' book these words : " I have inspected this place and am satisfied with it ! "

To return, however, to Cadiz, at which port M. de Salvandy, having kept his promise, had ordered the despatch-boat *Le Véloce* to be in waiting. Received with due honours, Dumas and his party embarked, and setting sail on November 21, visited first Tangier, then Gibraltar, where "the fog which the English had brought with them" was alleviated by the courtesies of Sir Robert Wilson. When off Oran, hearing that some French prisoners lately ransomed from the Arabs were at Melilla and waiting to be picked up, Dumas begged the commander of the *Véloce* to make for that place. On arrival, however, it appeared that the prisoners had already left for Djema-r-'Azouat, where the *Véloce* party found them safely in charge of Colonel (afterwards Marshal) Macmahon, and about to be entertained at a banquet in honour of their deliverance. To this banquet Dumas was invited, and exhibited such enthusiasm as to persuade himself ultimately that his presence had materially contributed to the rescue of his countrymen. He lost no time in taking the good news to Algiers, but as the Governor—Marshal Bugeaud—was away and not expected back for a fortnight, it seemed good to fill in the time till his return by a cruise along the coast. Having persuaded the authorities at Algiers that this use of the *Véloce* was within his rights, he proceeded to Tunis—the furthest easterly point which he touched. Here came an interview with Sidi-Mohammed, whom Dumas was able by means of a French newspaper to assure as to the safe arrival in France of the Bey of Tunis, in return for which good news he was presented with the Order of the Nisham. Staying a few days in this town and investigating the population—Arabs, Moors, and Jews—he amassed plenty of "copy"; he received also presents from the natives, purchased curios for his château at Saint Germain, and generally made an imposing figure. Other

places were then visited. The party went a little way inland and had some sport with small game; at the same time, though not seeking to anticipate the exploits of Tartarin, they met Gérard and heard some fine lion stories from him. At Constantine Dumas picked up for twelve francs a ferocious vulture, which, having named it "Jugurtha," he resolved to take back with him to France, despite the protests of his friends. Jugurtha, cage and all, was accordingly conveyed by coach from Constantine to Philippeville; but here the coach stopped, and the travellers had before them a two-mile walk to Stora, where the *Véloce* was waiting. The difficulty was about Jugurtha: the only way seemed to be to attach a long rope to the creature's chain, then to get him out of his cage and drive him on in front by means of a stick, as turkeys are sometimes driven. While these measures were in progress Jugurtha assumed at first an offensive attitude. No sooner was he out of his cage than he soared aloft; brought down by the rope, he made a vicious onslaught upon Dumas' legs; repelled by the blows of the stick, he at last recognized his master and fell in with the arrangements. Then the march began; the *Véloce* was reached; once on board, Jugurtha soon grew mild, and lived to fill an honoured place in the *ménagerie* of Monte Cristo. But the rest of the party avowed, with tears of laughter, that never in their lives had they seen anything quite so funny as the spectacle of Dumas proceeding gingerly along the coast with his vulture in tow.

After spending New Year's Day of 1847 at Algiers and witnessing an imposing reception of an Arab Sheikh by Marshal Bugeaud, our special commissioner and his friends embarked (January 3) on the *Orénoque* for Toulon, and as they steamed away the *Véloce* gave them a cordial send-off —her officers standing on the deck, her men manning the



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A DRAWING BY CARLO GRIPP.

yards. There is no saying how far the two volumes of impressions, entitled *Le Véloce*, fulfilled M. de Salvandy's idea of interesting the French nation in the welfare of Algeria. Possibly they were too frank for their purpose. Dumas said some plain things about the delays of French justice, nor did he restrain his contempt for speculators who regarded the colony solely as a means of money-making. Moreover, while extolling those brave soldiers and administrators who were working in Africa for the benefit of their country, he did not conceal the fact that he regarded their lot as a wearisome exile.

After this pleasant expedition some less pleasant consequences awaited the novelist immediately on his return to Paris. First there were angry editors demanding, not indeed his blood, but more solid compensation for the inconvenience which his abrupt departure, with stories left unfinished, had caused them. Foremost among these were MM. Émile de Girardin and Véron, representing the *Presse* and the *Constitutionnel*. The case came before the Civil Tribunal on January 30, 1847, and as the defendant pleaded in person the Court was crowded. Dumas, as might have been expected, did not lay much stress on legal points, but he enlarged most affably on the exceptional difficulty of his position, and on the credit which he had done his country both at Madrid—where he had been the guest of the Duc de Montpensier, and had received the Order of Charles III—and in Algeria, where he had used the *Véloce* to help in saving the lives of Frenchmen. In doing these services he had spent—he told the Court—£1,500 of his own, so that really he deserved some consideration. Let them only give him time and he would fulfil all his engagements, which so far from denying he displayed at length—reckoning up line upon line (at one franc per line), chapter upon chapter,

volume upon volume, until every one said "Prodigious!" The *cause* became a *causerie* of the most agreeable sort, and Alexandre Dumas Davy de la Pailleterie in appealing, partly *ad misericordiam*, partly *ad risum*, was so successful that the Court ultimately considered £120 to be sufficient compensation for each of the plaintiffs instead of the £2,000 they had claimed; at the same time it made an order that the defendant should within a specified time supply the *Presse* with eight and one-fifth volumes and the *Constitutionnel* with six and one-third. Dumas, in short, took little harm by this action: it did not impair his friendship with at least one of the plaintiffs—Émile de Girardin,—and it gave him the opportunity of appearing to the public as the indispensable man without whom no paper could get on.

Much more vexatious was the political incident to which the cruise of *Le Véloce* gave rise. An officious deputy, anxious to embarrass the Government, requested the Minister of Public Instruction to justify his conduct in placing a vessel of the navy at the disposal of a private person. An interpellation was also addressed to the Minister of Marine as to why *Le Véloce* had been taken off her proper duty, and as to the amount of coal consumed by her and the cost thereof. The Government's explanation was that there had been a misunderstanding on the part of the authorities at Algiers, who, on the vessel's first arrival there, ought not to have let her put out again to sea for that little cruise on which Dumas had insisted. The matter was a trivial one, and would hardly have attracted notice except for a dearth at that moment of any other topics of interest. But what annoyed Dumas was that his name should be ignored, and that he should be persistently referred to in the debates as "that person" (*ce monsieur*), just as though he had been

a common and unknown tourist. Not content with this, one of the speakers actually declared that the French flag had lowered itself by sheltering "that person"; the aggrieved "person" demanded reparation from the offensive deputy, who, however, declined the challenge, taking refuge behind his privilege of Parliament.

And while Dumas was thus involved with editors and politicians literary people were making merry over an open letter which appeared in *La Revue Britannique* from the pen of Thackeray, eulogistic indeed—for Thackeray was a genuine admirer—but not without an undercurrent of Thackerayan satire. Herein, together with some pleasant chaff on the prolixity of the great novels and the endless possibilities of continuation, it was pointed out that the story of *Terence le Tailleur* (which was brought into *Le Capitaine Aréna*), and likewise a good portion of *Les Aventures de John Davys*, had been taken without acknowledgment from the *Revue Britannique*. Did Dumas, we wonder, wince ever so slightly under these playful thrusts? Probably not. At any rate, to console himself for all mortifications, he had his great theatre and his fairy palace. The *Théâtre Historique*—built by Dédreux, and ornamented with the sculptures of Klagmann, the paintings of Guichard, and the decorations of Séchan—was opened on February 20 (1847) with a dramatized version of *La Reine Margot*, in which people admired much the masterly impersonation of Charles IX by Rouvière, an actor whom Dumas had discovered. Next came two foreign plays, *Intrigue et Amour*, translated from Schiller, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, done into French by Dumas and Paul Meurice. This piece had been made two or three years before, and had already been privately performed at the Saint Germain Theatre, but it was now for the first time presented to a public audience.

According to Paul Meurice, Dumas had originally offered *Hamlet* to the Français, but, indignant at the comicalities which some of the *artistes* found in the literal rendering of the English into French, he took back the play and kept it until he could produce it as he chose. *Hamlet* in this form is a literal rather than a faithful translation, though the action is altered in some parts—especially at the end—from that of Shakespeare's tragedy.

But the great success of 1847 was undoubtedly the *Chevalier de Maison Rouge*—again a play from a novel, a stirring drama, the last scene of which represents the banquet of condemned Girondins awaiting execution and singing *Mourir pour la patrie.* "Mark my words," said Dumas to the conductor of the orchestra when they were rehearsing, "our next Revolution will be performed to that tune." And, sure enough, *Mourir pour la patrie* became the street cry of the Revolution of 1848.

Thus the *Théâtre Historique* was launched with all prosperous omens. Not less so the château, soon to be known as "Monte Cristo." For it happened that the actor Mélingue and his wife, invited down to Saint Germain, suddenly remembered when taking a carriage at the station that they did not know the name of their host's residence. It was necessary, however, to direct the driver.

"Go to Monte Cristo," said Madame Mélingue by a happy thought; and the man, who had read the story, understood at once, and took them to their destination. So the name stuck; "though," says Dumas, "I should never have been presumptuous enough to choose it myself." Here the new lord of the manor took up his regular abode in 1847 If he had ever really wanted a peaceful retreat his hopes must soon have been shattered. Every one had heard of Dumas' "folly," every one was anxious to see it and to enjoy the

hospitality of its owner. A royal beginning was made when some five or six hundred invited guests came down to inspect the place and to be afterwards entertained at the Saint Germain theatre with an improvised play called *Shakespeare et Dumas*. The house and grounds were now in a sufficiently forward state to give visitors a good idea of them ; and the host, resplendent in his uniform as Captain of the National Guard, did the honours handsomely. Viewed from outside the château struck people as a *bijou* building of modest dimensions and excellent taste. It consisted of a ground floor and two upper ones—in shape a quadrilateral, flanked with two Renaissance-style turrets, and with a stone balcony running all round. The only external mark of caprice was the frieze formed by a series of medallions, each representing some famous author, beginning with Homer and ending with Victor Hugo.

" I don't see you among them, Monsieur Dumas," said a visitor.

" Me ! oh ! I shall be inside," was the genial reply.

Inside, of course, there was more elaboration. Having entered by the front door, above which were the arms of Dumas with his motto, " *J'aime qui m'aime*," the visitor was introduced to three rooms—a waiting-room, a dining-room with oak panelling, and a *salon*, the curtains of which were of rich cashmere brought by Dumas from Africa. One notable arrangement of all the rooms was that in each of them three sides had windows with magnificent views, and where the fireplace came there was a window above it. Note that Dumas planned everything himself, without forgetting the staircase—as a celebrated novelist was said to have done when designing his house. Upstairs the different apartments and their furniture represented the styles of different periods—Gothic, Renaissance, Henri II, Louis XV. But

the gem of the château was a small room known as "la chambre Arabe." This was an Oriental divan, divided by Moorish arches; its walls and ceiling were one mass of most marvellous arabesques, executed by two natives of Tunis, whom the Bey had lent to Dumas for this purpose, recalling, as every one remarked, the exquisite moulding of the Alhambra. In the lower part of the walls mirrors were set, and the arches were hung with violet velvet. The decoration of this one room, which took more than two years and was never completed, together with the various works of art which adorned the house, added substantially to the cost of Monte Cristo. Outside, from the circular terrace on which the château stood—a terrace commanding as fair a landscape as the eye could wish—a grassy slope spread downwards, watered by streams flowing from a series of cascades. A little way from the house an island had been made, and on it a miniature castle or kiosque—having a toy water-gate and a moat two feet wide. On each stone of this Lilliputian structure was engraven in red letters the name of one of Dumas' books—numerous enough to cover all the stones. The inside formed a tiny hexagon room, the ceiling of which was sky blue studded with gold stars and crossed by oak beams with imitation foliage. The hangings were of blue cloth, the mantelpiece high and elaborately carved. In this little den, just capable of holding a chair and a small table, was the master's special sanctum and place of work: here, as "*cave canem*" over the door indicated, he was not to be disturbed: here, while visitors roamed at pleasure over the house and grounds, he used to sit in the window and write, and have his meals brought to him. According to Vergil's precept, "*Nudus ara, sere nudus*," his habitual working costume was simplicity itself —a shirt and trousers, in summer of batiste, in winter of

some heavier material. Dumas in his shirt sleeves was as familiar a figure as Balzac in his dressing-gown.

For the rest, Monte Cristo had its liveried servants, its coach-house and stables (containing four horses and three carriages), its conservatory, its fruit and flower gardens—to say nothing of dog-kennels, aviary, poultry-yard, and various receptacles for various animals. "Accommodation for man and beast" might have been posted up at the entrance of this too hospitable domain. Dumas was a man of many acquaintances, and it was natural that his literary and theatrical friends—whether on business or on pleasure bent—should be frequently looking in. But besides these legitimate visitors, who generally came on Sundays, and the duty of entertaining them, a whole swarm of adventurers and parasites—needy and seedy and greedy—flocked to find an easy victim. "My weak point" (Dumas confesses) "is vanity": he had also the weakness of a tender heart. And so sometimes it was a flatterer who sought the *grand homme* to express his admiration of this novel or that, and who was then, of course, invited to stay to dinner; sometimes it was a friend of early days—a *pays* of Villers-Cotterets—evidently out-at-elbows, whom Dumas coming across would carry off to dinner and set him in the place of honour. Again it might be some one with a story or reminiscence of "the General," like the man who turned up one evening with a parcel in which was carefully wrapped up a curious shiny object—to all appearances the casing of an umbrella.

"Are you a dealer in umbrellas?" asked Dumas.

"You are wrong, sir," said the man,; "this is the skin of a splendid boa-constrictor."

"And what on earth do you suppose I want with the skin of a boa-constrictor?"

" I am sure, Monsieur Dumas, you will value it as a relic when you know that the creature to which this skin belonged was shot in Egypt long ago by your father, General Dumas."

Needless to say the skin was accepted : the stranger was kept to dinner, then slept the night, and eventually took up free quarters at Monte Cristo. That was the worst of it : these people stuck, and once they got a footing there was no dislodging them. Occasionally one or other, more sensitive than the rest, sought to make himself useful in return for his keep, as witness the time-honoured story of " the thermometer man." This was the person for whom Dumas, to avoid turning him adrift, invented the duty of going every day to see what the thermometer registered : " I assure you, my dear fellow, that you will be doing me a very great service : there is an intimate connexion between theatrical receipts and the condition of the atmosphere, and it is most important for me to be well informed on this point."

The " man with the watch " was a more contemptible sort of rascal. He it was who came with a pitiful story of destitution, saying that he had nothing left but his watch, which, as it had belonged to his father, he was unwilling to pawn or let go into unworthy hands : " Would *le grand romancier* buy it ? " Dumas had not the slightest need just then of a watch, but to help the poor devil he agreed to give him fifteen *louis* for it. Happening to have only five at hand he told the man to come back in a few days for the balance, and forgot all about the matter until the stranger duly reappeared to claim the balance of ten *louis*.

" I daresay you won't mind if I give you a bill for the amount ? " said Dumas.



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A CARICATURE BY ANCOURT IN "LE BOUFFON."

"Not at all," replied the other; "I know a man who will discount it for me at twenty per cent."

"Ah! but I don't want you to lose by the transaction; here, take these fifty francs to cover the loss."

Overjoyed, the man was departing, when Dumas called out: "By the way, while you are about it, you might just as well get this little bill done for me—a thousand francs at three months."

The commission having been fulfilled, the "man with the watch" seemed such an excellent man of business that Dumas offered him board and lodging, and retained him as a *factotum* for similar services. The original bill for the watch was never met: time after time it was renewed, and it was not discharged until, many years later, the novelist had sold the copyright of his books to the firm of Michel Lévy, when "the man with the watch" claimed and got something like two thousand pounds. Evidently he was a very good man of business.

But the harpies, as we know, were not of the male sex; and by women, even more than by men, Dumas was devoured, to which result his weakness for *les femmes adorables* contributed especially. Monte Cristo, in fact, was ruled by a succession of fair *châtelaines*, mostly of the theatrical prosuasion, who found it a very agreeable place to pass a week or two. A sort of free *table d'hôte* was kept for all and sundry: some came occasionally, others made a point of attending on certain days of the week—a curious medley of both sexes and all classes, enjoying themselves at the expense of the man who was meanwhile working away in his kiosque at the romance in hand. Sometimes a moan escaped him: "I don't say that it does not give me pleasure to write my novels, but it is not quite the same pleasure as that of my friends who don't write them." And again:

" Hereafter men will describe me as a *panier percé*, and they will perhaps forget that it was not always I who made the hole in the basket."

At intervals, moved by the remonstrances of real friends, he tried the desperate remedy of going off for a few weeks; but unfortunately the establishment remained, and the parasites came for their meals just the same. If provisions ran short at the château an adjournment was made to the hotel at Saint Germain—the old *Pavillon de Henri IV*—where Dumas had a running account, which his " friends " made no scruple about increasing. During one of these absences the actress who was for the time being installed as mistress of Monte Cristo wrote frantically to Dumas to ask him what was to be done about the servants' wine: " There was no more *vin ordinaire* left in the cellars—nothing, in fact, but champagne."

" Let them have the champagne," Dumas wrote back; " it will do them good." Here, in a nutshell, is a whole volume of domestic economy.

After the parasites the creditors, after the creditors the bailiffs—the order is logical and relentless. The creditors —like the " man with the watch "—often made a good thing out of it, through Dumas' rooted objection to pay at the moment any account, however trifling, which might be put off till the morrow. That bootmaker, for example, of the Boulevard des Italiens, who made fifty journeys from Paris to Monte Cristo to get his little bill settled, was always welcomed with effusion. " What, you again, old fellow! well, this is fortunate. I just happen to want three pairs of patent leather boots. . . . Your bill, you said; oh yes, we'll see about that after luncheon. Come along now and look at my natives working at the ceiling of the divan: they are wonderful."

So the bootmaker had luncheon, after which he strolled about the garden and picked a bouquet for his wife. Later on came dinner; then Dumas loaded the man with fruits and sweetmeats for his children before ordering the carriage to take him to the station, and as he departed, putting into his hand twenty francs, said: "Here, you must take this for your railway fare!" By repeating the process the tradesman, in the course of a year's visits to Saint Germain, received about three times as much again as the amount of his bill, which was only a matter of ten pounds, and which of course remained unpaid.

Pass from the human to the other animals: they too in their humbler way helped to consume. Concerning their numbers and species Dumas has much to say in the *Histoire de mes Bêtes*. He fancied himself a great lover of animals, though in reality what he cared for was only their human side—those qualities, in short, which made them amusing. There is not much of the zoologist in his studies of natural history, nor was his knowledge of the subject very profound, despite his essay on "gorillas" and his claim to be an authority on "snakes." Two members of the "Noah's Ark" of Monte Cristo have already been introduced—the dog Mouton and the vulture Jugurtha, whose name by the way was changed to "Diogenes" when he took to living in a tub. There were also three apes, two parrots, a golden pheasant—"Lucullus," a peacock and his mate, and a varied assortment of fowls, which had to be carefully protected against the cat, "Mysouf." But it was the dogs who abounded most, and chief of the dogs was "Pritchard," a pointer picked up at Ham one day when Dumas was visiting Louis Napoleon, then a prisoner in the fortress of that place. Pritchard, unlike Mouton, was on the best of terms with his master, at whose table he fed, and whose hospitality he

imitated by inviting any stray dogs of the neighbourhood to come in and be happy in the land of plenty. Hence, before long, a miscellaneous pack was gathered together; and Michel, the head gardener—a confidential man—thought it was his duty as a matter of form to protest.

"Do you know, sir," he said, "that there are now thirteen dogs here?"

"I did not know it," replied Dumas; "but thirteen is an unlucky number, Michel, and one of them is sure to die first."

Michel pondered this axiom, and then suggested that he should be allowed to drive out all the intruders.

"As you please," said his master; "but let us remember the laws of hospitality. The dogs, after all, by remaining here are paying homage to my house; so give them a specially good dinner to-day, as it will be their last." But after a moment's reflection he added: "We ought not to forget, Michel, that as landed proprietors we have certain charges to bear, certain duties to perform. No—let the dogs stay—they won't ruin me. However, we mustn't let them be thirteen in number."

"Very good, sir: I will turn away one, so as to leave twelve."

"No, Michel, you had better let an extra one come in—that will make fourteen."

The gardener sighed, and went away.

This Michel, a type of the staid and respectable servant, may be regarded as head of the domestic hierarchy of Monte Cristo: his opposite in every way—to pass over servants of intervening degree—was a negro called Alexis. This treasure had been left on Dumas' hands by some one anxious to find a place for him, and as there was nothing particular for him to do, he was put in charge of the apes at wages

of thirty francs a month. But being of a volatile nature, Alexis was always giving notice: first he went off to be a sailor, then he tried the National Guard: in each case, after a while, he turned up again at Monte Cristo, and was received back into service. Eventually he became valet, in which capacity he had a peculiar fancy for wearing his master's best clothes and strutting about on the boulevards, where he came to be known as "the Black Prince." As a specimen of humanity Alexis was very entertaining; as a servant his independent habits made him useless. At last Dumas summoned him one morning, when he happened to be in the house, and said: "Now look here, Alexis, I have got some pleasant news for you: I have just engaged a servant to wait on us both: the only thing I beg of you is not to take the man with you when you go out for your walks." Then Alexis divined a hint. Regretting that he seemed no longer suitable for his master, he confessed that his true vocation was that of a soldier, to which, after a friendly parting, he betook himself.

So much for the life at Monte Cristo, in the midst of which Dumas found himself again stirred by his old ambition to engage in political affairs—an ambition revived by the semi-official mission to Madrid and Algiers. With the Reform agitation of 1847 and the demand for a wider franchise, he, as a consistent Republican, and one who numbered among his friends Bixio, Godefroy de Cavaignac and Charras, was in full sympathy. His position is made quite clear by this letter addressed to Odilon Barrot, and published in the *Journal des Débats* of December 2, 1847, as an apology for absence from a Reformers' banquet:—

"DEAR PRESIDENT,—I am laid up in bed with a horrible cold in the head and chest. Please express my regrets to

our party, and be sure that I am with you all in spirit. I meant to have proposed a toast to 'the Press,' by which I mean those writers who struggled in 1830, and are struggling again in 1847, for popular and progressive principles. This toast I propose as I lie here: see you that the echo of it is heard.

"Yours very sincerely,

"A. DUMAS."

When the February Revolution broke out Dumas was eagerly to the fore, and it was no fault of his that he had less opportunity of distinguishing himself now than he had in 1830. He made himself responsible, as "Commandant," for summoning the National Guard of his district, but the people of Saint Germain were apathetic, and little disposed to entrust their sons and brothers to his leadership. He appeared, however, on the scene in the midst of the excitement, and claims to have been the only officer in uniform present at the moment when the mob overran the Chamber of Deputies and vetoed the proposal to make the Duchesse d'Orléans Regent. The crisis being over, Dumas for the moment remained quiet, and was able afterwards to record with pride the remark of Lamartine, who expressed astonishment, "after meeting me on the field of battle, not to have seen me since then."[1] But that he was now seriously bent on politics is sufficiently shown by a letter addressed a few days later to the editor of the *Presse*, in which these words occur: "To you and to the *Constitutionnel* belong my novels, my books, my literary life; but to France my words, my opinions, my political life. From this day forward there are two persons in the writer, and the public man will be the complement of the poet."

[1] Quoted in the address of Alexandre Dumas to his fellow-citizens of Seine et Oise.

The distinction between the public and the private man is further emphasized by this extract from a letter of March 4 to the now exiled Duc de Montpensier: "I was proud, my lord, to be called your friend when you occupied the Tuileries; now that you have left France I claim that title. . . . Pray God I may never fail to preserve unsullied the veneration which belongs to the grave and the worship which is due to exile." In the same spirit, quixotic though it may seem, he retained for the next year or so the Duke's box at the *Théâtre Historique*; and the new President of the Republic, when he attended a performance one evening, saw in the vacant box of the exiled Prince a token that Revolutions do not efface friendship.

Consistently with this honourable expression of personal loyalty, Dumas wrote on March 7 to the *Presse* protesting indignantly against the removal of an equestrian statue of the Duc d'Orléans from the courtyard of the Louvre. In this letter, after eulogizing the Duke's character and many good deeds, he ended by saying: "Surely the Republic of 1848 is strong enough to sanction the splendid inconsistency by which a prince is left undisturbed on his pedestal while Royalty comes tumbling down from its throne."

Considering the violence of Anti-Orleanist sentiment at that time, this protest was as courageous as it seems to be intelligible: none the less it was bound to handicap fatally Dumas' chance of being elected to a seat in the Assembly. On this he had now set his heart, though uncertain to what constituency he had best apply. As a well-known and influential resident of Saint Germain he might naturally have come forward in the department of Seine et Oise; on the other hand, his activity in the "three days" of February had displeased many, while others professed to regard him as too

" immoral " to represent them. Then he bethought himself of his native place and the department of Aisne, but here too his reputation—ever since that famous raid on Soissons—was that of an ultra-republican, almost a revolutionary; and he feared he would have little chance of getting a majority. Eventually, on the advice of some well-meaning but injudicious friends, he resolved to try his luck in the Yonne. No sooner was his intention known than the local papers began to inquire in a nasty way what his qualifications were—" Did he know anything about the Burgundy vintage ? " " Had he studied the subject of vine culture ? " and so on. Moreover, just as he had been too much of a republican for the other places, so here his opponents would have it that he was nothing but an agent of the Orleanist party, and his letter about the statue was brought up and made much of. Undismayed by these difficulties, he began his electoral campaign in October 1848.

Dumas as a candidate was just the sort of candidate we should have expected Dumas to be. He canvassed actively and merrily, driving all about the country, and delighting his companions with the stream of anecdote and legend suggested by every château they passed by. Zealous and in high spirits, minor details occasionally escaped him. When going one day to Joigny to address a meeting he discovered that he had brought no money with him, and so the friend—who fortunately had—was left to pay first for the postchaise, then for the hire of the assembly-room, and finally for a big dinner, to which Dumas had invited every one he met on the road. Not only did the friend pay, but he declared afterwards that the money was well spent, so much had he enjoyed that electioneering tour with such a companion.

The meeting at Joigny proved to be a stormy one, the



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A CARICATURE BY CHAM.

Ma cuisine commence à prendre tournure . . . . encore un peu d'ail et ce sera parfait. . . !

enemy being present in force, and receiving the candidate as he entered with groans. One rude fellow went so far as to shout out, "What price niggers?" and Dumas had to be held back from getting at that man and punching his head. The uproar increased, and there was every prospect that blows would be used instead of arguments. Then one of the electors made his voice heard: "You profess yourself a republican; yet you assume the title of Marquis de la Pailleterie, and you have been secretary to the Duc d'Orléans."

"Yes," replied Dumas boldly, having reached the platform, "I once claimed that title, of which, as being my father's, I am proud; that was at a time when I had made no name of my own. Now I am some one on my own account; I call myself plain Alexandre Dumas, and all the world knows me. You, sir, as well as any other—you, an obscure nobody, who come here to see me and insult me, just that you may be able to go away and tell people to-morrow that you have known the great Dumas . . . Really, sir, if that was your ambition, you might have satisfied it without violating the laws of decent behaviour."

This was pretty straight for the heckler, and the meeting appreciated it by loud applause. Dumas seizing his chance, went on—he was not an "orator" in the accepted sense, but he knew how to talk and how to hold an audience. The reference to the Duc d'Orléans had given him just the opening he wanted. Eloquently, because with genuine feeling, he justified his letter in the *Presse*, described the Duke as he had known him, and reminded his hearers how all France had lamented the untimely death of a Prince so conspicuous for goodness and patriotism. In short, he carried the meeting with him: his sincerity, his gestures, his emotion, so worked on their feelings that within a quarter of an hour every one was weeping—Dumas included. Per-

sonally it was a triumph ; politically—for that came next—the speaker gave less satisfaction, especially in his remarks on foreign affairs. On this subject, with complete independence and with that same instinct of divination we have noticed before, he dwelt on the danger of Prussia's steadily growing power : " Denmark, Holland, Belgium have sunk into nothing : you will see Austria fall before Prussia, and some day perhaps—may it not be so !—France also." At this of course the patriotic audience hissed loudly : some of them no doubt remembered the prediction twenty-two years later. Ultimately the electors, as we know, did not choose the author of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* to represent them, having probably made up their minds from the first that it was a pity to spoil the *romancier* by the deputy, or the deputy by the *romancier*. As a part of this second digression into political life, we should include the foundation of a monthly *résumé* called *Le Mois*, " entirely edited by Alexandre Dumas," a journal which ran from March 1848 to February 1850. That people would not take the editor or his opinions seriously was something of a grievance, though not nearly so acute as enemies were pleased to imagine. When constituents rejected him as a " friend of princes," he could always fall back upon the Princes. To the names of his Royal admirers should now be added that of William, the Crown Prince of Holland, from whom came a cordial letter enclosing some designs made by a Dutch artist to represent scenes from *Les Trois Mousquetaires*. In return for this compliment Dumas went to Amsterdam in 1849 to attend the Prince's coronation, and was very indignant when the papers gave out that he had gone there to write an account of the ceremony. " I should like it to be known," says he, " that when I attend these functions, I do so as a friend, not as a reporter." In all struggles

between rulers and subjects he was broad-minded enough to allow that there were two sides to the question: "Which are in the right, princes or people? Posterity will have to give the answer, but personally I shall put my money on the people." Among sovereigns who held their thrones more or less on sufferance, Leopold, King of the Belgians, struck him as an example of dexterity: "At every revolution in France, and every sign of disturbance in Belgium, this good King runs to his balcony and, addressing the mob, says: 'My children, you made me your King by your own doing; I never desired the position, and ever since I have occupied it my one wish has been to get out of it. If you have had enough of royalty, give me an hour's time and I will leave the kingdom: I assure you that is the chief reason *why I have encouraged railways.* But be sensible; don't break anything, for that will do no good.' And the people would shout back: 'We don't want you to go away—not we: we only wanted to kick up a little row, and having done so now we are quite satisfied.'" As a parody of a certain sort of kingcraft there is a good deal of sense underlying this pleasantry, though possibly King Leopold might not have relished the way in which it was put.

Meanwhile in France Louis Napoleon had been elected President; and Dumas, as having known the "prisoner of Ham" and the Bonapartes generally, addressed (December 18) to the new chief of the State a letter in which he urged "that the Comte de Chambord and the Orleans Princes should be recalled from exile, that the Duc d'Aumale should be reinstated as Governor of Algeria, that Lamartine should be made Vice-President of the Republic, and that General Cavaignac should receive a Marshal's bâton." These recommendations, based on a laudable desire to make every one happy all round, met with no response.

And what, one may ask, was happening during these times to the *Théâtre Historique*? It had begun well in 1847, when the receipts amounted to nearly £18,000. Then by cruel ill-fortune came the disturbances of 1848. *Monte Cristo*—dramatized from the novel, and by reason of its length divided into two parts, played on consecutive evenings—had just been put on at great expense, when it was interrupted by the February Revolution. Henceforth the new theatre, before it had yet established itself or repaid its outlay, had to struggle against those conditions of political insecurity and preoccupation which, in Paris especially, spell ruin to all places of amusement. The receipts of the second year were less than half those of 1847, and they continued to diminish, in spite of several changes of management. This result, which may be attributed partly to the lavish scale of salaries and the elaborate mounting on which the theatre prided itself, was certainly not due to any lack of excitement or variety in the play-bills. *Monte Cristo* was followed by *Catilina*, *La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires* (which is the story of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*), *Le Chevalier d'Harmental*, *La Guerre des Femmes*, *Le Comte Hermann*, *Urbain Grandier*, *La Chasse au Chastre*. Over none of these plays will the dramatic critic of Dumas delay much, for he will recognize that none of them surpass and some of them fall short of the earlier dramas. *Catilina* will fall into line with *Caligula*, as republican Rome to imperial Rome. Like *Caligula* too, and like *Richard Darlington*, it is marked by one of Dumas' favourite devices—a startling prologue, representing in this case one of the early crimes of Catilina which Sallust has referred to.[1] About the sequel of this

[1] *Multa infanda stupra fecit . . . cum Virgine vestali.* (Sallust's *Catilina*, chap. xv.)

crime history says nothing; but Dumas, coming as usual to the rescue of history, invents a sequel, and displays it when the curtain rises on Act i. fifteen years later—in the person of young Charinus, whose devotion to his father, Catiline, is the keynote of the play. Apart from this, there is in *Catilina* abundance of facts, of historical personages, of local colour; and it is evident that Sallust, Cicero, and Plutarch have been well and truly searched—doubtless by Maquet.

Le Comte Hermann, on the contrary, is quite modern, illustrating an evolution in the author's mind which the words of his preface explain: "You ask me for a simple and passionate domestic drama like *Antony* or *Angèle*: well, I will give you one, but the passions will no longer be the same. Instead of physical love and brute passion you will find the chastity of a woman and the devotion of a man employed to produce the emotion and the tears which, seventeen years ago the author sought to produce by other passions." *Le Comte Hermann* is to be considered, then, as a sort of "Twenty years after" to the early dramas of the modern category. The "incandescence" of 1830 has gone, or at least has been diluted by social views more mellow and thoughtful, which amount substantially to the protest of charity and love of one's fellows—as embodied in the Count—against pseudo-science and selfishness personified in the doctor Fritz Sturler. For one scene in this play Dumas, who extracted dramatic value from everything, utilized an incident of his own career. The Count, when his nephew Karl is starting off to fight a duel, carefully buttons up the young man's coat, so as to show no shirt, and folds the collar inside the necktie. Now this "business" was suggested to the author by his experience many years ago in the duel with Gaillardet, on which occasion the latter had

presented a perfectly black surface from top to toe. "I thus found out," says Dumas, "what professional duellists know, that the most difficult thing in the world to aim at is a man completely clothed in black."

Such were the chief plays produced at the *Théâtre Historique*, which, after a short four years' existence, closed its doors in 1851, and was soon afterwards demolished in the new Boulevard constructions of the Imperial Government. About the same time it became necessary to put up the shutters at Monte Cristo, and the pretty toy which had cost twelve thousand pounds was sold at auction for twelve hundred. It is usual, in the way of moralizing, to point a contrast between the illusions of *Monte Cristo* the novel and the realities of Monte Cristo the château, or between the money which the author raked in from the one and that which he shovelled out through the other. But the financial failure of Dumas was due not so much to domestic extravagance as to losses over his theatre, which constituted an immediate burden of debt and a perpetual drain upon his receipts for the next ten years.[1] At the end of 1851, bothered by his many difficulties, he left Paris for Brussels—a journey which various other people were making at that time. Though not one of the victims of the *coup d'état* of December 2, he found consolation in classing himself with those who were: it was more glorious to be fleeing from an illegal tyrant than from legal creditors.

Thus ended the Monte Cristo days—the epoch of the "*grand homme*," so far as the greatness was connected with wealth and display; and the man who had been making an income variously estimated at from ten to twenty thousand

[1] Dumas declares that between 1850 and 1860 he paid ten thousand pounds in connexion with the liabilities of the *Théâtre Historique*.

pounds a year now found himself with no assets except such as were prospective. True his name was still "current coin" (as Heine said), and his talent was a gold mine not yet exhausted; but henceforth both had to be put at the rude service of necessity.

Rash speculation, reckless waste, and all the other obvious truisms may be taken as said. "Whatever my hand grasps it holds tight, except only money, which somehow flows away through my fingers." That is the spendthrift's own confession. How much of it flowed away in mere charity cannot be a matter of exact knowledge; but we know that the spendthrift in the midst of his own embarrassments never failed to respond to the distress of his friends, as one may see, for example, from this little note to Jules Janin:

"DEAR JANIN,—You have heard of poor Maillet's death: we buried her to-day. She leaves an old mother and a young child. The mother is eighty-seven. Help us in whatever way you can—subscriptions, benefit performances, etc.—to get her into the Hospital for the Aged. As for the boy, if his father does not claim him, I will make myself responsible for him. He is only three years old, and doesn't eat much yet! I will work one hour more a day and *tout sera dit*.

"Yours,

"ALEX. DUMAS."

"I reopen my letter to tell you that Dorval[1] has just died.

[1] This was Madame Dorval, the actress, to buy a grave for whom, Dumas, after subscribing himself and getting subscriptions from others, finally—to make up the balance—pawned his Order of the Nisham.

Her people have sent for me, and I must be off there at once to help them."

Many an improving chapter might doubtless be written on the prodigality of Dumas, but every chapter would demand some postscript of this kind.



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM A CARICATURE BY G. CHANOINE.

"Voyez ce d'Artagnan.—Qui ne voirait l'entendre :
" Faites de vos bravos, cortége triomphal,
" A l'écrivain qu'emporte un fougueux bucéphal
" Je suis dans l'art du drame un vaillant Alexandre !"

CHAPTER X

THE STRUGGLE TO RETRIEVE

(1852–1864)

AT Brussels the exile established himself quite comfortably in 73, Boulevard Waterloo. The house, luxuriously furnished and served by liveried footmen, showed no signs of distress; and Dumas, who was equally "at home" whether at the end of the earth or at the end of the street, or at any intermediate point, was delighted to entertain his numerous compatriots then sojourning in the capital of Belgium. One of these became a permanent inmate, and a very valuable one—Noel Parfait, a Liberal deputy outlawed by the new Government. The poor man, leaving his wife and family in Paris, had turned his steps to Brussels, not knowing how or where he should find a living. Falling in with Dumas, and being hospitably welcomed by him, Parfait set himself to earn his keep handsomely. Never was secretary more industrious. His host, of course, was busy writing—among other things beginning those ten volumes of *Mes Mémoires* dedicated to the Comte d'Orsay, which, though (apart from a few allusions) they do not carry their author's life beyond 1832, abound in information and anecdote about almost every subject under the sun. Of this book, and seven or eight others, the original MS. was destined for France: Parfait's business was to make four copies—for Belgium, Germany, England, and America;

and it has been estimated that he copied, in all, the amount of 128 volumes.[1] The two—master and secretary—used to sit together in an attic at the top of the house, which was used as a study in order to escape from too frequent callers, each writing away hard, and sometimes without exchanging a word for hours. Dumas with rushing pen blackened reams of paper, never pausing to put in stops, never erasing, never re-reading what he had written; Parfait, receiving sheet after sheet, dotted the "i's," inserted the commas, marked the paragraphs—in a word, took far more pains with the copy than the master did with the original.

In this study a bed was made up, as likewise in two other rooms on the floor below—an arrangement arising from a peculiar habit of the "great man," who, after writing for some hours at a stretch, would suddenly get up, fling himself to bed, and in a few seconds be sound asleep; fifteen or twenty minutes later he would wake up again with equal abruptness and return to work—a giant refreshed. Hence the three beds, which were always kept ready made. On such occasions tired Parfait would say, "Good! five minutes interval now, time to stretch one's legs at any rate." The secretary would have liked a nap himself, but he dared not; he would probably have slept the round of the clock.

The same man fulfilled other functions no less important. He managed the household and held the purse. Submissive as secretary, as minister of finance he was inexorable. Realizing the need of retrenchment and reform he sternly checked all domestic waste; he kept down the bills and settled them regularly; he baffled dishonest servants and grasping tradespeople—in brief, he supplied the economic soul which was wanting to the other. Did Dumas make

[1] I.e. in the Lévy edition; in the original Cadot edition—less closely printed—it would have been nearly 400.

merry with his friends, Parfait was there to moderate the flow of champagne; did Dumas return to the house radiant with some new purchase which had taken his fancy—a picture or work of art—the frown of Parfait reminded him that these things had to be paid for, and the honesty of Parfait took care that they were paid for. An excellent man and a true friend—would there had been more such!—he sought out and collected every available asset, recovered balances which would otherwise have been let slide, applied the strict methods of business to the easy-going transactions of literature. No light or grateful task, it may well be imagined; and the man who undertook it was a dire offence to all such visitors as hoped to find the indiscriminate hospitalities of Monte Cristo revived in the Boulevard Waterloo. "Jamais content"—the old grumbler—they nicknamed him, and wondered how Dumas could tolerate such a skeleton at the feast. The master himself, though thankfully conscious how much his affairs prospered by this treatment, had moments of revolt when he found some pet weakness or other interfered with. No more now that unguarded heap of sovereigns on the mantelpiece into which Dumas—or any one else—might dip at pleasure: no more the unlocked cash-box and the open desk. Hence at times an irksome lack of pocket money which made the ex-lord of Monte Cristo exclaim one day: "Here for the last six months I have had an honest man in my house, and upon my soul I have never been so badly off in my life!"

Under this healthy discipline work flourished: in that direction Parfait had no call to limit the profusion of this and the three or four following years. Autobiography and other biography was represented in *Mes Mémoires*; imaginative travel in *Un Gil Blas en Californie*; history in *Louis XVI et Marie Antoinette*; drama in *Le Marbrier*, *Les Gardes*

Forestiers, *La Jeunesse de Louis XIV*, and *La Conscience*—the last-named being dedicated to Victor Hugo with these words: "Receive it as the testimony of a friendship which has survived exile, and will, I hope, survive death itself. I believe in the immortality of the soul." In fiction the most notable productions of this period are *Olympe de Clèves*, *Les Mohicans de Paris*, and its sequel, *Salvator*. The first of these, considering its own interest and its popularity in France, has some claim to be ranked among the great novels. It is a story—in more or less historical surroundings, during the early part of Louis XV's reign—of the exciting adventures and tragic end of a beautiful actress and her husband—a young Jesuit novice who has fled from his monastery and followed the fortunes of Olympe in Paris and elsewhere. *Les Mohicans de Paris* and *Salvator* form a loosely collected series of scenes representing Paris life from 1827 to 1830, in which, among a host of characters—young artists and actors, spies, criminals, Carbonarist conspirators, and so forth—the most interesting figure is perhaps that of a M. Jackal, the head of the secret police, who appears to have been the originator of that long-since hackneyed maxim, "en tout, cherchez la femme."

These are but specimens: what use to multiply them? There comes a time when the chronicler can no longer cope with the industry of his subject, but must content himself with picking a few straws from the stack, pleased if he do this not wholly at random. Dumas the *conteur*, for example: in this capacity alone how many moods does he display! One in particular is suggested by a little book called *Les Mariages du Père Olifus*. Quite a trifle in itself, but take it in connexion with three other volumes which preceded it—*Les Mille et Un Fantômes*, *La Femme au Collier de Velours*, *Le Testament de M. Chau-*

velin—and the four together form a sort of series illustrating the *conteur* in a phase which is not exactly that of *Monte Cristo*, nor that of the *Mémoires*, nor that of the *Mohicans de Paris*, though indicated in all three. It is, so to say, the "twilight" phase, appropriate to that uncertain hour when daylight has failed but lamps are not yet lit, and the gathered company sits around ready to be thrilled by some flesh-creeping tale introduced with "And now I will record a strange circumstance." We know these circumstances; so did Dumas—quite a number of them, derived mostly from Nodier, that lover of the weird and uncanny. Without professing them to be original—and few stories of this sort ever are original—he hangs them on to some casual and personal pretext, invests them with his own manner of narrative and dialogue, and often attaches them for plausibility to a semi-scientific or medical theory which he has heard discussed. Naturally the guillotine supplies a plentiful stock: others relate to dreams, presentiments, apparitions—whatever borders on the supernatural. Consult, therefore, *Les Mille et Un Fantômes* on the question whether a head can speak when severed from the body, and on some gruesome details about the execution of Charlotte Corday; or read *La Femme au Colliers de Velours* for an even more shuddering guillotine story about Danton, Arsène, and young Hoffmann; or *Le Testament de M. Chauvelin* to see how a dead man returns to put his name to his unsigned will; or *Les Mariages du Père Olifus* to realize how closely a mermaid, or a *femme-marine*—perhaps not quite the same thing—clings to a human husband when she has got hold of one. In subjects of this sort Dumas is far from the detached irony of Mérimée (e.g. *La Vénus d'Ille*); rather he treats them as a confidential question of interest between himself and the reader, as though to say, "There may be

something in it—what do you think ? " That way is not ineffective either.

Thanks to the labours and economies of nearly two years in Brussels, thanks especially to the services of a supple little Semite called Hirschler, who did marvels in compounding with creditors, Dumas' affairs were now more easy when towards the end of 1853 he returned to Paris, without, however, giving up for the present his house in the Boulevard Waterloo. Having lost one fortune he still cherished the hope of replacing it by a second, to which end he was convinced that, instead of supplying other people's newspapers with fiction, the better plan would be for him to have a paper of his own. From this idea sprang *Le Mousquetaire*, " journal de M. Alexandre Dumas."

" Impossible," said the wise heads, " that such a paper should live."

" Thank you, gentlemen," replied Dumas : " the *Mousquetaire* will live just because it is impossible."

Discounting purposed discouragement on one side and D'Artagnan bravado on the other, there was no reason in the nature of things why such a venture should not succeed. The name was a happy thought, and the personality of the proprietor attracted added interest by reason of his temporary absence. Moreover the dumb-struck condition of the Paris press, gagged in matters political by the censorship of the new imperial Government, offered distinct opening for a paper which, avowedly non-political, might by judicious satire become a real political force. But this conception does not seem to have appealed to Dumas ; and any such hopes of his friends were disillusioned by the prospectus of the first issue (November 12, 1853), from which it was evident that literature and art—in a familiar and colloquial form—would occupy whatever space of *Le Mousquetaire*

was not filled by the reminiscences of its chief. The new journal, in fact, was intended to be entertaining (*amusant*) and personal: not that this would be against it commercially, given good management. There everything lay, and the aims of *Le Mousquetaire*—actual or imaginary—became of secondary importance. The start was brilliant enough, and a circulation of ten thousand copies reached within two months—a high figure according to the standard of those days—augured a further expansion sufficient to satisfy any ambition less world-embracing than that of Dumas. No one could say that office accommodation absorbed too much money, for the premises of the new daily—editorial and managerial (the printing was done elsewhere)—were exiguous to a degree, consisting of two small ground-floor rooms in the courtyard of the Maison d'Or, out of the Rue Lafitte, and a little sanctum on the third story where the chief sat and wrote. Central the place undoubtedly was, and there was no lack of publicity. On the contrary every one found his or her way to the Maison d'Or, some bringing their contributions, others—authors and actors—to request a favourable notice, the majority from mere curiosity and to pass the time. And all these people—a most miscellaneous and motley gathering—whether on business bent or on pleasure, packed together like sardines in that small space, jostled and pushed one another, talked and argued, laughed and screamed: pandemonium you would say. But this daily crowd and turmoil produced diverse effects. To the presiding genius who sat above the sounds from below were pleasant and inspiring: he, being no lover of stagnation, considered them a sign of good business: only when the sounds ceased—as might occasionally happen—he grew uneasy, and shouted down to inquire what was the matter. Another well-satisfied person was the restaurant proprietor

over the way, who rubbed his hands and declared that the police would no longer be able to object to the rowdiness of his establishment, which had become by comparison a model of quietude. The private residents of the neighbourhood, who had at first feared nothing less dreadful than assault and murder, soon took the hubbub as a matter of course: "It is only M. Dumas," they said, "and his newspaper." Alone, the cashier and business manager of *Le Mousquetaire* was gravely perturbed—one Martinet by name, imported from the methodical office of *Le Siècle* and aghast at this new journalism. Vainly he strove to keep out intruders by the usual notice over the door, "No admittance except on business"; vainly he mounted the stairs with demands for remuneration from the staff, or with bills for paper and printing. Dumas did not like being interrupted. "What do I keep you for, Martinet, except to attend to these matters? Pay the people and don't bother me."

"Pay them! But, cher maître, there is no money."

"No money! What has become of the new subscriptions that came in this morning?"

"You forget that you took three hundred francs just now for your personal requirements."

"Three hundred francs! What's that? Why the copy I have written to-day for the paper would have brought me in four times that amount from the *Presse* or the *Siècle*."

The manager respectfully pointed out the difference between the financial position of old and well-established papers and that of a newcomer making its way. The master understood, and vowed self-denial; but next day, or the day after, it was the same thing, until in two or three months' time Martinet, whose lengthening face revealed his sure conviction of disaster, either resigned or was dismissed. With his departure the pretence of regularity

ceased. The treasury—a sinecure office—was handed over to our old friend Michel, the ex-gardener, who, said Dumas, "being hardly able to read or write, and having no knowledge at all of figures, is eminently fitted to be the cashier of an establishment where there is no cash." Michel's fidelity was unquestioned: his financial experience was chiefly of a negative sort, gained during the last days of Monte Cristo in the exercise of ingenious methods for barring the approach of writ-servers, of which devices one, more notable than the rest, was this. The direct path through the grounds to the house led over a movable bridge spanning a small watercourse. Michel, on hearing the bell of the lodge-gate ring, would reconnoitre from a distance, and if the person who entered was an obvious minion of the law he would quickly derange the machinery of the bridge and hide himself behind a clump of trees. Unsuspecting, the bailiff advanced and trod the treacherous planks, when suddenly a bolt gave way and he found himself plunged in three feet of water. Then it was a cry of "Help! help! I am drowning!" and gallantly Michel would sally forth to the rescue, while the official, thankful to have escaped a watery grave, after tipping his deliverer, would retrace his steps, thinking no more about that stamped paper he had come to deliver.[1] Such Planchet-like exploits of Michel were thoroughly appreciated by his master.

But the burlesque side of *Le Mousquetaire's* career must not obliterate the fact that for some time that paper made a considerable show. Many eminent men

[1] *A propos* of bailiffs every one will recall the crusted anecdote which tells how Dumas, being called upon one day for a subscription of fifteen francs towards the funeral expenses of a deceased bailiff, rushed eagerly to lay hold of all the loose cash he could find, and thrusting it into the hands of the caller exclaimed, "Fifteen francs to bury a bailiff! Here, take thirty and bury two of them!"

made haste to welcome it and to announce themselves as subscribers. Here wrote Lamartine from his retreat: "My dear Dumas, you ask me for my opinion about your paper. I have opinions on things human but not on *miracles*: you are superhuman. The world has sought perpetual motion: you have done better—you have created perpetual amazement. Farewell, may you live—that is, may you write! I am here to read." Ever so slight a tinge of satire, perhaps, but good Dumas was not the man to notice it, and the letter of course appeared in large type in *Le Mousquetaire*.

Next came from Michelet—he too an exile—cordial good wishes to "Mon cher Alexandre," and Alexandre promised his readers a series of studies on the great historian—a promise unfulfilled. Then followed a characteristic testimonial from Jersey:

"I read your paper.
You restore to us Voltaire.
Last consolation for dumb down-trodden France.
Vale et me ama.

"VICTOR HUGO."

The readers of *Le Mousquetaire* had no chance of admiring, or even of trying to guess—by way of a puzzle—the meaning of this disjointed eloquence; for Dumas had been warned that to insert a word of Hugo would mean the instant suppression of his paper. Prudence prevailed, and the greeting of the illustrious exile was reserved for strictly private circulation. In revenge, every one at the Maison d'Or was abusing "the Dutchman" (as Dumas called Louis Napoleon, thereby endorsing a current scandal as to his birth), and *Les Châtiments* were being quoted wholesale.

It is even said that Dumas sent a copy of this work to Princess Mathilde and another to Prince Napoleon, who read it with the surreptitious pleasure which only relatives can feel in hearing members of their own family abused.

Another admirer nearer home was the suffering invalid of the Rue Amsterdam. From his sick bed Heine kept up a joust of raillery with his old friend, " ce grand garçon de Dumas," whose stories, read to him by Madame Heine, beguiled many a weary hour. " Next to Cervantes and Scheherazade," so ran Heine's message, " you are the most delightful story-teller I know. Why don't you come and see me ? . . . Upon my word, I can find only one fault in you—your modesty. You are really too modest. . . . The people who accuse you of boastfulness and rodomontade have no idea of the greatness of your talent : they only see the vanity. For my part, I protest that—of whatever stature that vanity be—it will never come up even to the knees of your marvellous talent." Thus to the pain-racked poet of *Atta Troll* the full vitality of Dumas appealed with bitter contrast. He praised, and praising—in his way—he sneered : he jested, and jesting spoke the true word.

With the general public also, as well as with the choice few, the early popularity of *Le Mousquetaire* was attested, alike by the publication of a parody called *Le Moustiquaire* and by references from the stage of many theatres, always taken up and appreciated by the audience.[1] The paper, too, appeared regularly, and managed, for the first few months at any rate, to pay its contributors—some most punctiliously, as Madame la Comtesse Dash (" Gabrio " to

[1] E.g. in a vaudeville where a popular actress sang to the effect that " les belles Parisiennes s'endormaient chaque nuit avec un *Mousquetaire*." (The chronicler adds that to avoid misunderstanding he would wish to underline the word *Mousquetaire*.)

her friends), for whom, by Dumas' special provision, a gold *louis* was regularly set aside each day, wrapped up in paper, and handed to the maid-servant who came to fetch it. The chief himself worked hard but intermittently. Sometimes, in a fit of disgust, he would go off for a week or two and leave the paper to its own devices. A more serious mischief was that, impatient of a too slowly remunerative property, he resumed writing for other journals, allowing his own to be supplied by the staff; and this change the public was quick to perceive and resent. The "staff," however—using the word to cover all who at one time or another did something for *Le Mousquetaire*—was a gorgeous and manifold collection of present and coming celebrities, from which it is only a matter of caprice to pick out a few names such as those of Méry, Roger de Beauvoir, Gérard de Nerval, Octave Feuillet, Théodore de Banville, Aurélien Scholl, and—perhaps now almost the only survivor—Henri Rochefort. Add to these all the former assistants of Dumas except Maquet, who was now utterly estranged and already meditating that action at law the failure of which so mortified him that the "grand homme" and "cher maître" of former days became to him the "coquin éternel qu'on appelle Dumas."

Substantially the most valuable person connected with the Maison d'Or was no doubt Polydore Millaud, a benevolent capitalist, afterwards the founder of *Le Petit Journal*. *Le Mousquetaire* existed only two years: without his subventions its life had been still shorter. "Bad business" was Millaud's criticism of the *Mousquetaire* management, especially of that quixotic philanthropy which led Dumas to convert his journal into a sort of bureau of charitable works. For this, too, happened, and "my readers" were always being invited to contribute to the relief of some one or other; of which peculiarity the most extreme instance

was a subscription list opened for the purpose of repairing and keeping in better order the grave of Balzac—a generous movement, it may be added, considering the little love which Balzac living had borne to "the negro."

Long too and curious might be the list of minor men of uncertain utility and dubious origin who in these days hovered round the proprietor of *Le Mousquetaire*: one humorist, for example, who, advocating the introduction of a classical tone, recommended the *Iliad* as a serviceable *feuilleton*—an idea which Dumas welcomed in all simplicity, and was proceeding to publish translated Homer in instalments, over his own signature, until laughter and indignation broke off the scheme: or again, the factotum Rusconi found by Dumas in Italy, most devoted to his patron, whose boots he blacked, whose visitors he sampled, and whose letters he wrote: or once more, that shadowy and shady personage who called himself Count Max de Goritz, while his wife claimed to be a granddaughter of Louis XVI. This "Count," pretending himself a political refugee from Hungary, had at first adhered to Dumas in Brussels, then followed him to Paris, where he became "translator-in-chief," having for duty to pick out and put into French any promising matter from foreign papers. Unfortunately the "Count"—whose real name was Mayer—was wanted by the police for pickings other than literary: he had to leave Paris hurriedly, and during his wanderings for some time to come he managed to swindle any Frenchman he met by borrowing money from them on the ground that he was on the staff of *Le Mousquetaire* and a friend of M. Alexandre Dumas. The exposure and flight of this adventurer caused no slight sensation in the Maison d'Or. Once more, as so often in his career, Dumas had been imposed upon; and this result was due partly to his sympa-

thetic nature—for the man had originally posed as destitute and on the point of suicide; partly to his love of patronage; partly to his easy-going credulity—for, whether he ever really believed in the genuineness of the "Count" or not, it was obvious that he had not troubled to make any inquiries. Even when the facts were known, distressed and disconcerted as he was, he contented himself with saying, "Well, the fellow may be a scoundrel, but it is no business of mine to find the rope to hang him with."

A more common form of annoyance which Dumas had to undergo, that his editorial cup might be full, took the shape of importunate contributors. Most conspicuous of these was a certain Madame Clémence Badère, who, angry because a story of hers had first been rejected and then published with ruthless emendations, after shooting much indignant correspondence into the letter-box of *Le Mousquetaire*, finally published her wrongs to the world in a pamphlet called *Le Soleil Alexandre Dumas*. This document—the refrain of which is: "I *can* write, whatever M. Dumas may think"—is, considering the possibilities of the subject, a monument of dulness, having for its sole point a comparison between the rays of the sun and the collaborators of Dumas, "who," says the lady, "are sixty in number"—yes, and they would have been sixty-one if Madame Badère had been appreciated as she deserved.

Sufficient has now been said to show cause why *Le Mousquetaire* was not a commercial success. Before long the distinguished but unpaid contributors melted away, sometimes in batches; and their places were taken by other contributors, not equally distinguished but equally unpaid. Dumas—a fact evident *a priori* to every one but himself—was not meant by nature or habit to be the conductor of a newspaper; yet with singular infatuation he clung to the

idea of "mon journal à moi," declining all offers of amalgamation; and after the *Mousquetaire* had ceased he started another, *Le Monte Cristo* (1857), then at intervals *Le Caucase* (1859), *Les Nouvelles* (1866), and *Le Dartagnan* (1868), each more ephemeral than the last.

Inefficiency of Dumas *père* as editor, some one will say; but what of Dumas *fils*, whose name has not been mentioned in connexion with *Le Mousquetaire*? To say the truth, the young man—though occasionally in the office of the paper, and once or twice a contributor to its columns—had never taken kindly to this venture. Partly he had measured in advance its issue, partly his inclination led him to paths other than journalistic. Since the failure of the Théâtre Historique the relations of the two had been quite changed; and the son, no longer able to look to his father for support, had been living quietly with his mother, until, having suddenly burst into fame with *La Dame aux Camélias*, he found himself launched on a dramatic career of abundant promise. That he did not see his vocation in "devilling" for his father was, it is certain, somewhat of a grievance to the older man; and so, when people began to talk great things of young Alexandre, Dumas would shake his head sceptically, with something perhaps of a feeling not unknown in distinguished parents who consider that the talents of their offspring ought to follow their own in kind while remaining respectfully inferior in degree. Afterwards, when the first success had been surpassed by a second and yet a third, the father, recognizing how firmly his son had laid hold of contemporary life, was ever forward to magnify "my best work," and even to describe for the benefit of the public, with some adornments of questionable taste and accuracy, the originals of the "camelia lady," the "pearl lady" (*Diane de Lys*), and the other lady—

Madame Adriani (*Le Demi-Monde*). Characteristically, when once on that track, he does not curb his enthusiasm. Of the son's literary work he says: "What he has done is all in his own field: it is his own property which he has made for himself and not inherited from me. . . . I indeed should be the first to admit that I have not the power to write works like *La Dame aux Camélias*, *Diane de Lys*, and *Le Demi-Monde*." At the same time, to prevent any hasty assumption of humility, he adds: "Still I can do other things, *Antony*, for example, *Le Comte Hermann*, *La Conscience*." Henceforth the world saw in *père* and *fils* two quite distinct and independent persons. Considered as writers, the one seemed to have the profusion and ornateness of a *fresco*, the other the clearness and precision of a photograph: both certainly had wit, but the wit of the one sparkled, that of the other penetrated. Considered as men, the elder was known to be heedless and prodigal, the younger shrewd and acquisitive. The world seized hold of this contrast, made the most of it, sometimes even a little exaggerated it—tickled by an apparently inverted relationship in which the decorous son looks after the irresponsible father, apologizes for him, and occasionally indulges in an epigram at his expense.[1] As time went on, while the younger waxed and the elder waned, the contrast became more marked. We may recognize both the humour and the pathos of this position, without underlining them. The fact is that, dating from *Le Mousquetaire* epoch, the son assumed his own individuality. In literature as an

[1] E.g. "If my father does not set me a good example, he at least provides me with a good excuse."

Public opinion is not inaptly illustrated by a drawing in one of the comic papers representing Dumas *fils* as a grown man and the other as an infant, with this legend: "Here is a child who gives great anxiety to—his son."



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

AT THE AGE OF 60 YEARS, FROM AN ETCHING BY RAJON.

independent colleague he often helped his father; in life, combining filial piety with brotherly love, he was still more helpful. It is pleasant also—for the softer lights of domesticity are rare in the history of the "prodigal father"—to know that his son's success formed a bond of interest and reconciliation between Dumas and the excellent woman who, thirty years before, had been his neighbour in the Place des Italiens. Otherwise the two men took their separate ways, often not meeting each other for weeks, but whenever chance flung them together, for longer or shorter periods, always most excellent friends.

In 1857 they went, in company with others, to England for the inside of the Derby week. The elder Dumas had made his first acquaintance with this country some twenty years earlier: he had revisited it in 1855 and again in the spring of 1857, when he witnessed the general election and gave some account of it to the readers of *La Presse*. Apparently his presence in London on this occasion led to some annoying comments, for a letter of his appears in the *Times* of April 4, which translated runs as follows:

"As *The Times* is considered to be the best informed journal in Europe, and as I am anxious that it should continue to deserve that reputation, allow me to correct two errors into which you have fallen as regards me. (1) I am not M. Dumas *fils*, but M. Dumas *père*; (2) I do not write for *La Presse* 'by the line,' but for my own pleasure.

"Believe me to be, yours faithfully,

"ALEX. DUMAS."

It was on this visit that, happening to pass a Sunday in London and not knowing what to do with himself, he filled in the time at his hotel by writing the greater part of the

comedy in one act called *L'Invitation à la Valse*.[1] This utilization of odd moments was no rare event with Dumas, and may be noted as illustrating the pleasurable activity which literary work was to him. Very much the same thing had happened a few years before in the case of the little play *Romulus*. Having missed the last train to Paris, after a day's shooting with Count d'Orsay, he had to pass the night at Mélun; and never being much of a sleeper—least of all when away from home—he set to and wrote this comedy, the idea of which had occurred to him some time before but had lain dormant. *Romulus* was handed to the actor Regnier on condition that it should be read to the committee of the Français as the work of a young and unknown author. This caprice was complied with, and not till the play had been accepted was the real authorship divulged. The committee, Dumas says, were rather annoyed at the trick played upon them, and revenged themselves by keeping *Romulus* waiting for more than two years before putting it on the stage (1854).

To revert, however, to the second visit of 1857, which was undertaken under the auspices of a Mr. Young and had for its avowed object to see the Derby. Recalling his recent experience of Sabbatarian dulness Dumas did not leave Paris till Monday, and he returned there on Saturday, staying meanwhile at the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill—then a well-known hostelry. His impressions of England—which in his case meant London and Manchester—are those of the casual French visitor, not the well-informed

[1] Edmond About (in his speech at the opening of the Dumas monument) referred to this comedy as having been written in one night at Marseilles in 1858. But—besides Dumas' own account—the fact that *L'Invitation* was produced in August, 1857, shows this to be clearly a mistake. M. Glinel suggests that the play which About saw at Marseilles was *L'Honneur est satisfait*."

traveller. He was not a Taine studying us philosophically, nor a Mérimée with a large circle of social and literary acquaintance, still less was he like any of the distinguished Frenchmen who in these later days have examined us: his primary object was to be amused and to write something which would amuse his countrymen. Quite superficial, therefore, his remarks are, though not ill-natured. It was doubtless due to his ignorance of the English language that his curiosity did not enlarge itself on individuals; and though at a dinner given at Greenwich he was introduced to a good many people to whom he distributed autographs, it is obvious that he was little the wiser for hearing their names, unless something out of the way struck him, as the name of "Alfred Crowquill" (Alfred Forrester, the *Punch* artist), whom he designates as the "Gavarni of England," explaining that "Crowquill" is equivalent to *plume de corbeau*. The translation process led sometimes to hazardous results, as when in admiring the equestrians of Hyde Park he remarks that the riding thoroughfare is "Rotten Road" (*le chemin pourri*), or turns Blink-Bonny (the Derby winner) into *le joli Clignoteur*, or describes the "dog-cart" as "*voiture des chiens*, where the masters are considered as of secondary importance."

The Derby Day was the chief event of his stay, and he did it in the good old traditional style—carriage and four, postillions, hampers of food and drink. The crowd, the dust, the noise, the incidents of road and course—all that we associate with the once great national holiday—invite his ready pen; nor does he pass unnoticed a certain plebeian amusement, which he describes as *le jeu de bâton*, but which, if he had observed his usually faithful literalism, he would certainly have written down as *la tante Sally*.

Dumas, of course, is not a cultivator of epigram or

aphorism: his sayings come currently and as it may happen, but they are often none the less good on that account. Here are a few, culled at random from his English experiences:

"The Derby Day is the carnival of London which has no carnival."

"A gallop is the regulation pace on Derby Day: everything goes at a gallop—even the donkeys."

"One of our friends asked a lady the other day if she disliked the smell of a cigar. She replied, 'I really do not know, sir; no one has ever smoked in my presence.'"

"The English abbreviate everything. Cab comes from our *cabriolet*; *vin d'Oporto* has been shortened first to Porto and then to Port; even in the case of a family name, where they cannot abridge it in substance, they abridge it in pronunciation, as Lord Brougham, for example, which they pronounce *Broum*."

"The Achilles statue, in the way of sculpture, and Wellington's house, in the way of architecture, can be seen at one glance; the art in them counts for nothing and the good intention for everything."

Our visitor had occasion in his walks abroad to ask a good many questions, but he seems to have found it difficult to get satisfactory answers, for he says:

"An Englishman, astonished at your question, says 'Ho!'; if he is very much astonished he says 'Ho! ho!'; but, however astonished he is, he never makes any answer."

The Derby, after all, was only a pretext: Dumas' secret object in coming to London was to purchase some of our porcelain ware, which next to that of China and Japan he admired most. "The English people, the least artistic and most industrial of all peoples, almost reaches art by means of industry." It was the large *vases de toilette* and

the Bohemian glass lamps that he particularly affected. For this purpose a visit was made to 129, New Bond Street, where Mr. Daniel, the proprietor of the shop, insisted—as a compliment to the great M. Dumas—that he should take whatever he wanted at the cost price of the article.

"But," said Dumas, "suppose I should take the whole shop?"

"In that case," replied the polite Mr. Daniel, "I will renew the stock."

Dumas did not take the whole shop, but he was highly pleased with this gratification of his *amour propre*; and he adds:

"Do you think that if Walter Scott or Byron had visited our French porcelain shops they would have been treated as handsomely?"

The *Great Eastern* (then lying off Millwall), the Crystal Palace, Cremorne Gardens, Madame Tussaud's—these were other sights during the 1857 stay, which was apparently Dumas' last visit to England, although of course he met many English *littérateurs* at different times in Paris.

Returning to the house which he now occupied in the Rue d'Amsterdam, he used his English experiences as subjects of pleasant *causeries* for the readers of the *Monte Cristo*. The *causerie* became a recognized institution in these journalistic ventures, and one which, in its peculiar form, he may be said to have invented. Nothing he loved better than to expatiate on any and every topic with a kind of amiable egotism so good-humoured that the reader cannot fail himself to share the good-humour—which is, perhaps, the supreme merit of this form of writing. The subjects do not much matter: they are catholic, and even miscellaneous. Literature and art go without saying: next may happen to come a discourse on phrenology—for Dumas had had his

bumps examined by an expert and published the report, not unflattering, without a particle of false modesty. Or it may be cookery, which was a favourite theme. Enemies who accused him of second-hand knowledge on all other subjects were fain to admit his originality in this; though of course they protested that it was unworthy of a man of letters. It has been already said how, when in Spain, he invented the salad without vinegar or oil: the *poulet rôti à la ficelle* was another contribution to gastronomy; as was also the method of cooking a rabbit in its skin, suggested by a similar process which Dumas had once seen applied to a sheep by some Arabs. Needless to say that he did not stop at theory, but on many occasions proved himself in practice a master of the art. Justly, therefore, he could write, "I see with pleasure that my culinary fame is spreading apace and will soon eclipse my literary reputation"; and again, "As it is probable that some day or other I shall abandon the pen for the saucepan, I make no scruple of laying thus early the foundation of my ultimate renown. Every day I get letters from all parts of France consulting me on polenta, or caviare, or maccaroni *à l'Italienne*." And much more in the same strain, gay enough, but neither concealing—nor meant to conceal—a disappointed consciousness, as time went on, of being no longer quite the indispensable man of drama and of fiction.

Thus much is suggested by *Le Monte Cristo*, started by Dumas on his return from England, to take the place of the defunct *Mousquetaire*—a weekly paper this time instead of a daily. As to the little comedy—*L'Invitation à la Valse*—begun on that dull Sunday in London, it was produced at the Gymnase on August 3 (1857). On the manuscript of it were these words: "Written for my dear little child Isabelle, whose property this is." The "chère petite enfant" was

the actress Mademoiselle Isabelle Constant, with whom Dumas' relations—as the words imply—had now become merely paternal: that they had not been always considered so is shown by a note from Mademoiselle Augustine Brohan, in which, asking a friend to dinner to meet Dumas, she adds: "He will bring with him his half—his Isabelle: *mais bah! il n'y a plus de moeurs.*" (What former period the word "plus" may imply it would be difficult to say.) The invitation from Mademoiselle Brohan must have been some time before 1857, since in that year the friendship between Dumas and this celebrated actress was violently broken by some articles which the lady—over the signature of "Suzanne"—contributed to the *Figaro*, attacking freely Victor Hugo's political conduct. Dumas, ready as ever to take up the cudgels for his absent friend, promptly wrote to the director of the Français to request that Mademoiselle Brohan should not in future act in any piece of his. The result of this chivalrous, if somewhat unnecessary, step was that for the next ten years he deprived his plays of whatever advantage would have accrued to them from the interpretations of the leading *comédienne* of the time.[1]

In the summer of 1858 there came another spell of foreign travel, the destination now being Russia. This journey—which was extended to the Caucasus, and supplied several more volumes of "impressions"—was not a premeditated affair, but a sudden thought. The "table-turning" mania was then at its height, and the much talked of Home was the latest thing in Parisian society. Dumas, with his taste for all such curiosities, had become intimate with the "spirit-

[1] Not till 1867, shortly before her retirement and three years before Dumas' death, did Mademoiselle Brohan reappear in any comedy of his. In May of that year she acted Madame de Prie in *Mademoiselle de Belleisle*.

ualist," and through him with Count Kouchelef, a Russian nobleman whose sister Home was to marry. The wedding was to take place in St. Petersburg, and the Count and Countess insisted that Dumas should accompany the party as their guest to act as " best man " to the bridegroom. He did not need much pressing, and in June they all set out. At Berlin—the sleeping accommodation of the Hôtel de Rome being insufficient—Dumas, sending for mattress and blankets, had a bed made up for himself in a bath—dimensions not stated—and declared that he had not been too uncomfortable. From Berlin to Stettin, thence by boat to St. Petersburg. Staying in the Kouchelef mansion some little way out of the capital, the visitor did the sights of St. Petersburg, chiefly under the guidance of the Russian novelist Gregorovitch. Among other things he obtained permission from the chief of police to visit the prison where convicts destined for the Siberian mines were awaiting their eternal exile. With several of these poor creatures he talked, and their various stories saddened him so much as to give a sombre colour to his general impressions of the country. " Russia," said he, " is a great façade : as to what lies at the back no one cares : the person who should trouble to look behind would be like the cat which, seeing itself for the first time in a mirror, goes round expecting to find a cat on the other side. . . . Russia is the land of abuses, though every one from Emperor to peasant professes to desire the removal of abuses." (This, of course, was written before the emancipation of the serfs.)

After six weeks near St. Petersburg, Dumas visited parts of Finland ; then, returning to say good-bye to the Kouchelefs, he started on his independent travels, well provided with passports and letters of introduction. At Moscow he was sumptuously entertained by Count Narychkine, with whom

he stayed for a month; then, accompanied by an interpreter, set off to sail down the Volga. On the first stages of his journey he was escorted by several Russian officers, who drank his health as copiously as only Russian officers can drink: he found with pleasure that French literature and art were as familiar in the upper class of Russian society as in France itself. Nijni-Novgorod was the scene of an interesting meeting between the novelist and the hero and heroine of his story *Le Maître d'Armes*—Count and Countess Aunenkof—a book which, by reason of its prohibition, had been extensively read in Russia. At Astrakan Dumas enjoyed the Kalmuck hospitality of Prince Toumaine, saw thousands of wild horses chased into the Volga, and swimming across that river; witnessed a camel race; rubbed noses with the Prince, and wrote verses in the album of the Princess. From Astrakan he penetrated to still more remote regions, purchasing a *tarantasse* to drive across the steppes. He found it useful to wear on his breast a Spanish decoration, which caused him to be taken for a French general and procured for him the attention of Cossack troops at halting places in the desert. Eventually he got as far south as Tiflis, whence proceeding to Poti he had to wait several days for the boat which should take him to Trebizond. The enforced stay at Poti—then a mere straggling village—was the most disagreeable part of his travels. A miserable room in a miserable inn—an icy temperature in which with numb fingers the traveller tried to write his impressions of the Caucasus—a stove which gave heat only at the risk of suffocation—to crown all, in a yard beneath the room a nocturnal revel of pigs not only heard but seen through the disjointed flooring. From this desperate position Dumas relieved himself by a heroic remedy. Using the stove to heat the water in his basin to boiling point, he poured the

scalding liquid through the gaps of the floor right down on to the noisiest of the swine beneath, who thereupon fled away to continue their orgies at a safer distance. Perhaps it was some knowledge of this outrage which induced the innkeeper to charge his visitor at the rate of two roubles a day for a room which would have been dear at one quarter of that price. Everything, however, has an end; after four or five days the boat arrived, and Dumas embarked for Trebizond, thence to Constantinople, and so to Marseilles. The whole expedition had lasted ten months, and had cost him about five hundred pounds, including his purchases—a figure which would have been much higher but for the lavish hospitality everywhere accorded to him. One good thing came from Poti—an intelligent and faithful servant called Vasili, whom Dumas picked up there, took back to Paris, and retained in his service for the rest of his life.

A result of this journey was the foundation (April, 1859) of a short-lived journal of travel, *Le Caucase*, to fill which, when Dumas' contributions fell short, the publisher resorted to a Russian story by another author, who thereupon brought an action to restrain the publication, and recovered some small damages. Besides the books arising from his ten months in Russia—*Le Caucase* and *De Paris à Astrakan*—which included a number of translations of Russian poetry into French, Dumas produced in these years two historical novels dealing with events subsequent to the Revolution—*Les Compagnons de Jéhu* and *Les Louves de Machecoul*. The subject of the first—which covers the years 1799 and 1800, including the overthrow of the Directory and the battle of Marengo—was suggested by a reference in Nodier's *Souvenirs de la Révolution* to the fate of certain Royalist conspirators who, under the leadership of Georges Cadoudal, carried on a campaign against the Directory. They

were mostly young men of noble birth, and their method was—disguised as highwaymen—to infest the roads in the neighbourhood of Lyons and plunder every *diligence* carrying money or valuables belonging to the Government, while they refrained from touching private property. The breaking up of this organization was one of the first measures of Bonaparte after the establishment of the Consulate. Such were the "Compagnons de Jéhu," thus called because, just as Elisha had consecrated Jehu to exterminate the house of Ahab, so Cadoudal was authorized by the *soi-disant* Louis XVIII to exterminate the Revolution—a curiously fanciful analogy.

In *Les Louves de Machecoul* Dumas drew on his own memories of La Vendée in 1831 and the Legitimist movement which arose there in favour of the Duchesse de Berry and her son. Machecoul is a forest near Nantes, and the opprobrious title of *Les Louves* was given by hostile countryfolk to two beautiful and innocent girls—daughters of an old Royalist Marquis—with whose adventures the story is chiefly concerned.

Neither of these books, though interesting enough, comes up to the standard of the great novels—the second still less than the first. History and romance are both present, but the two do not seem so happily blended; and it is difficult to resist a feeling that Dumas—perhaps spoiled by the shorter shifts of journalistic work, perhaps simply from growing weariness—found in their composition little of that keen pleasure and interest which he is known to have found in his earlier fiction.

About the same time, with *Charles le Téméraire* (1859) and *La Route de Varennes* (1860), he published the last of a large number of historical works, which had been appearing at intervals during the preceding twenty years. When a

dramatist and a novelist, conspicuous for his imagination, turns historian, the world is sure to smile. There is no danger of laying too much stress on Dumas in this capacity: the danger is rather of underrating the amount of his knowledge shown in an immense accumulation of facts and truths, partly because of the easy and affable way in which they are put, partly because of their admixture with anecdote and gossip. To make persons and events attractive and entertaining was his avowed object, and that he knew how to do it will be apparent from a glance at his works, say, on Caesar or Louis XIV or Napoleon. Doubtless these books are not in request as preparatory to the study of history; but it is very certain that any one who chanced upon them at the outset would have his interest in the subject awakened and his appetite whetted for further study; nor could even the well-informed student fail to supplement his knowledge in many unexpected ways. There is no question here of original research, only of arrangement—but Dumas arranges well; and whether as regards facts his authority be Saint Simon, or Barante, or Thierry, or Michelet, as regards ideas he is no slavish follower of any master. On the contrary, whenever the flow of anecdote and *petit fait* is interrupted for the purpose of generalization, he has his own theories ready and his own language—copious and resonant—to express them. With him is no uncertainty of view, no balancing of probabilities, but the refreshing sureness of a mind untroubled by critical perplexity. The republican sentiment pervades all. Kings and courtiers are good for history because they supply amusing material, but the admiration of Dumas is all for the great men, and his love is all for the people.

The spell of literature indicated by these works and some others was soon broken. Dumas' excursion in Russia had

revived the roving instinct, to which was now added a feeling of disappointment often manifest in these later years and expressed in such a phrase as " Posterity for me begins at the frontier "—a feeling natural rather than reasonable, and betokening not so much a decline of power as the inevitable reaction of exceeding popularity. For one who loved to be ever on the lips and in the eyes of men it was a grievous lesson to learn that public curiosity, fleeting and inconstant, cannot be always focussed on the same person. Dumas was not envious of others, but he was rather sorry for himself, and this condition found its natural solace in a growing tendency to seek " the frontier."

For some time he had meditated—as he told his readers—an extensive Eastern tour which should include Greece, the Hellespont, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Palestine, and Egypt. " The expedition I want to make," he said, " is one which no one hitherto has done exactly in the same way. I must travel on a ship of my own—a ship which is capable of weathering the open sea and yet draws only a slight amount of water, so as to be able to enter every harbour in the Greek Archipelago and put in at every creek along the coast of Asia."

To realize this dream Dumas was having a yacht called the *Emma* constructed for him by a Marseilles ship-builder ; but while it was still in making the events of 1859 in Italy and the renewed prominence of Garibaldi inspired the author of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* with a keen desire to see and know the famous leader of the " Red Shirts." He therefore went to Turin, where, staying for some weeks as Garibaldi's guest, he collected from the hero's own mouth materials for the biography afterwards published as the *Mémoires de Garibaldi*. From this acquaintance was opened in the next year a field of romantic adventure which soon

caused the Eastern tour to be forgotten. The *Emma* was now ready; friends invited for the cruise were gathered at Marseilles; Dumas, in spite of his fifty-eight years, joyous and radiant as a schoolboy off for the holidays, stood on the quay receiving and returning the salutes of the crowd which had come to see and cheer him. Thus on a fine April day (1860) the *Emma* weighed anchor and coasted leisurely along to Nice and then to Genoa. Here the travellers learned the latest sudden phase of Garibaldism—the landing of the patriot and his "thousand" in Sicily to wrest that island from the Bourbons. At once they made sail for Palermo, the harbour of which they reached just as Garibaldi was seizing the town. The events which followed were such as gladdened the heart of Dumas to share and to describe. After accompanying Garibaldi in the conquest of Sicily he went off to Marseilles to purchase arms for the march on Naples. Stacks of rifles and carbines were procured and shipped on board the *Pausilippe*—the novelist freely advancing his own money for the cause of the Italian patriots; and when the "Dictator" entered Naples in triumph the *Emma* and its owner were waiting in the bay to welcome him. While lying off Naples Dumas had not been idle. He had been entertaining the Radical leaders on his yacht, stimulating their zeal with rhetoric and champagne, sending messages to Garibaldi, conferring with the pliable Liborio Romano, receiving and disregarding sundry semi-serious warnings to depart given him by the semi-loyal officials of King Francis. And so, when the King had retired and the Dictator was established, he might fairly look upon himself as having had some share in the result. Considering, rather prematurely, that things were now settled, he set his heart on continuing the explorations already begun at Pompeii, his idea being to get from Paris a staff of antiquarians and

artists to assist in this work, and from Victor Emmanuel a company of sappers to do the digging. Appointed by Garibaldi "Director of Museums and Excavations," and having taken up his quarters in the Chiatamone Palace—"Palace" by courtesy, for it was a rather insignificant dwelling—Dumas was in the full tide of this new scheme when an unpleasant incident reminded him that he was a stranger in a strange land. His office of course was purely honorary, with no emolument attached, but the populace of Naples resented the granting of this "privilege" to a foreigner: what business, said they, had this Alexandre Dumas to be meddling with the ashes of their Pompeii? From grumbling they proceeded to more active hostility. One evening while the party at the Palace Chiatamone sat at dinner sounds were heard outside as of a crowd approaching and in angry mood. The subject of this demonstration—quite unconscious of any animosity against him, and probably imagining himself the most popular man in Naples—inquired of his friends what was all this shouting about. Soon the cries grew more distinct. "Down with Dumas! Fetch him out! Fling him into the sea!" But as the novelist's friends had been warned beforehand they had communicated with the nearest troops, so that a captain and a company of infantry were at once available. The three or four hundred rioters, never very formidable, finding their way barred, were content to retire after venting their ill-humour in curses and threats. The incident was trifling in itself, but it revealed to Dumas a disposition of ingratitude which came as a bitter surprise. "When I returned into the house," writes Maxime Ducamp, who was present and has recounted the affair,[1] "I found him sitting with his head between his hands. I touched him on the shoulder; he

[1] *Souvenirs Littéraires.*

looked up, and I saw that his eyes were full of tears. 'I was accustomed,' he said, 'to the ingratitude of France: I did not expect that of Italy.' The sentiment may provoke a smile, but I was touched by it. Dumas had a right to expect, if not the gratitude, at least the good-will of the Neapolitan people. He had given them his time, his money, and his energies: it was not unreasonable to look for their indulgence."

Some one remarked consolingly that the rabble of Naples was proverbially worthless. "The Neapolitan populace," said Dumas, "is like the populace of every country: to expect a nation not to be ungrateful is like requiring wolves to feed on grass. *We* are the fools—we who put ourselves to so much trouble for creatures like this."

Demos at close quarters is not always so beautiful as seen through the halo of theory; still Dumas, in the anger of the moment, was judging "the people" by a low standard in applying that name to a few ill-conditioned brawlers from the scummiest of the scum. He soon recovered, soothed by the attentions of his friends and of the authorities, and continued to reside at Naples—with occasional flying visits to Paris—for nearly four years. While there he completed the *Mémoires de Garibaldi*, as well as writing a "history of the *Bourbons de Naples*" and *La San Félice*, the first of a series of three rather padded romances dealing with Neapolitan affairs in 1799, and introducing Nelson, Lady Hamilton, Cardinal Ruffo, Caracciolo, and various historical characters. Another novel published during this period—though Dumas professed to have had the story by him some time—was *Madame de Chamblay*. This purports to be a romance of real life—the autobiography, in fact, of a friend who, lost sight of long since, had sent this account of himself to Dumas from the West Indies, where he was living, with

injunction not to publish it till the lapse of a certain period. When the MS. arrived, unsigned and unaccompanied by any letter, Dumas, who received a good many unsolicited MSS., was on the point of flinging it away when the words *Ainsi soit-il* with a cross above them recalled to him the circumstances under which he had used those words to his friend, and so brought back the memory first of the handwriting, then of the writer. There is no saying how far this origin is true or fictitious : it may have been mostly mystification designed to arouse the reader's interest.

In addition to these works of fiction Dumas while at Naples started an Italian daily paper, the *Indipendente*, which was mainly a reflection of Garibaldian views. Between that leader and his distinguished volunteer there existed at first a warm mutual admiration. Garibaldi, indeed, had stood as godfather to a certain little "Micaella Clélia Cécilia," whose arrival in the world, at the end of 1860, must be explained by the fact that Dumas had taken with him to Italy a young lady known generally as "the Admiral," because of the sailor-boy costume in which she went about ; and this lady, needless to say, was the mother of Micaella,[1] who was the god-daughter of Garibaldi. But in course of time the friendship of the two men grew cooler,

[1] Dumas, who welcomed in true patriarchal spirit every accession to the number of his offspring, was as pleased as possible. He hastened to Paris to see the child, and after returning to Naples was constantly writing affectionate letters to the mother and the baby—at one time urging them to join him, at another enclosing 150 francs for Micaella to buy sweetmeats and toys—and generally displaying an exuberance which, under the circumstances, he alone could have displayed. Ultimately Micaella passed into the mother's control, when that lady separated from Dumas and, much to his annoyance, refused to let the child bear his name. In expressing his grievance on this subject one day to a friend, he said : "Je ne veux pas exagérer ; mais je crois bien que j'ai, de par le monde, plus de cinq cents enfants !" And he said this "*avec une fierté comique.*"

partly because Dumas—instead of letting politics alone and confining himself to his Pompeian researches—would persist in figuring as interpreter of the *vox populi* and worrying the much troubled chief with advice and warning either superfluous or impracticable.

After the Dictator's breach with Victor Emmanuel and compulsory retirement the *Indipendente* continued for a while to preach Garibaldism, thus bringing its editor more than once into conflict with the Italian Government. At length, disgusted by so many obstacles to his good intentions, Dumas relinquished this—his third and last—venture into affairs of State, and resolved to go back to France, which he did in the spring of 1864. His arrival, heralded by newspaper paragraphs, was something of an event. "I have just returned to Paris, as everybody knows," wrote he; and again, with his genial smile, as friends thronged round him, he exclaimed: "I am never so popular on the Boulevards as when I come back after a long absence." Once more he found himself the object of enthusiasm and curiosity. The world smiled upon him: he was in excellent health and spirits, and, except that the woolly hair had grown grey, he showed no sign of age. "Never," wrote a friend, "were good-humour, cordiality, and sympathy more plainly stamped on any human face than on that of Dumas." It is well to remember this, considering the multitude of bad portraits and malicious caricatures of which he was the victim.



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

FROM AN OIL PAINTING IN THE POSSESSION OF MADAME ALEXANDRE DUMAS FILS AT MARLY-LE-ROI.

CHAPTER XI

THE ENDING OF THE DAY

(1864–1870)

IN noting an occasional fretfulness against the ingratitude of the world, a fact has been signified which admits of no doubt. The financial failure of 1851, if not irreparable, had never been repaired: the literary success of the great novels had never been repeated. Certainly Dumas had no difficulty in placing his MSS., but the placing of them had become a matter that had to be thought about. Managers and publishers no longer strove to outbid one another in order to secure the work of his pen, and the consciousness of this change, magnified by an over-sensitive nature, affected unmistakeably a man whose object was to please and to be pleased—a man who wore his heart on his sleeve and always blurted out exactly what he felt. Living to write and writing to live were two different things, and the burden of the latter condition is apparent from frequent references to the "perpetual treadmill," the "rock of Sisyphus," and so forth. The old facility was still there —as witness the *Causeries*, the *Propos*, and the *Souvenirs*— but the old pleasure in inventing, and by consequence the old *verve* necessary to sustain a work of long scope, had departed. Add also the indolence natural to increasing

years, with a tendency to utilize old material rather than to produce new, and everything will have been said which can be truly said about the so-called "decadence" of Dumas: after all it was a decadence which would have been to most writers a glorious prime. If the years traversed in the last chapter represent a period of chequered light and shade, in those which follow gloom prevails: the clouds gather ever more and the sun shines less, until both are merged in night.

After a few weeks of comparative idleness in Paris, following his return from Naples, Dumas took a house for the summer of 1864 near Saint-Gratien. The "Villa Catinat"—as it was called—was a pleasant and spacious residence, with a garden large enough to be considered a miniature park, adjacent to the great lake of Enghien-les-Bains. At the top of the house a billiard-room served the novelist as a study: the billiard table, covered with a canvas cloth, was piled with innumerable books and papers. For neighbours, there were two old friends close by, the Princess Mathilde in one house and Émile de Girardin in another: of visitors, there soon appeared, as at Monte Cristo, a superfluity. Life at the Villa Catinat recalled, in fact, on a smaller scale, the life at Saint-Germain fifteen years ago. The lady of the house this time was a young woman from Naples who aspired to become a singer in Grand Opera, and who called herself professionally "Fanny Gordosa." The origin of this *liaison* is typical of many such. The lady had represented herself as the wife of an Austrian Count who ill-treated and deserted her: she had flattered Dumas and appealed to his pity: hence the position which she occupied. He, to whom all his geese were swans, or every sparrow a nightingale—believed implicitly in the capabilities of Fanny, not apparent to any one else: all she wanted, he thought,

was cultivation and training. To this end professors were brought from Paris, and the Villa Catinat became the scene of those excruciating sounds euphemistically known as "musical practice." Dumas bore these noises cheerfully, as also the society of obsequious professors, who lauded their pupil's powers and got her to introduce them to the *grand homme*, thereby securing an invitation to luncheon or dinner, or both. Then they brought others, and not musicians alone: in a word, the parasites of Monte Cristo began to muster again, fewer only because there was less to be got. Unhappily "the Gordosa," whatever her musical gifts, did not excel in housekeeping. She was constantly quarrelling with the servants—sometimes inconveniently, as when one Saturday she dismissed all three who composed the establishment and left the house servantless. A Saturday of all days was the worst, for every Sunday a number of friends from Paris used to turn up. On this occasion the servants in departing had left the larder empty—a discovery only made when the guests began to arrive on Sunday morning, and it was necessary to find a luncheon for them. Once more the culinary genius of Dumas came to the rescue. By good luck one or two of the guests had brought with them slices of ham and sausage roll as a contribution to the feast. These being handed over, Dumas, after ransacking every cupboard, came upon a quantity of rice, some cooking butter, and finally—to his great delight—a few fine tomatoes. From these, with butter added, a rich sauce was made; then rice was thrown in, boiled, and interspersed with slices of fried ham. From these ingredients a savoury and sufficient *déjeûner* was prepared for the dozen guests now summoned from the garden to enjoy it, and—excepting one or two who had assisted the *chef*—quite ignorant of the peculiar circumstances. They all praised the *riz aux tomates*, and praised

it still more when Dumas told them the secret; while he himself was almost as happy as if he had written another sequel to *The Musketeers*.

It need hardly be said that many of the visitors were people who carried the *sans-gêne* of their familiarity beyond all limits of decency. That twenty cab-drivers should appear one Monday morning at the Villa Catinat, each demanding from Dumas the price of a fare he had conveyed to the station the evening before, illustrates one variety of "undesirable"; another consisted of those who, arriving in the absence of the host, would coolly walk about the house and carry off—as a *souvenir*, of course, of "the master"—any book or ornament which might take their fancy. The establishment at Saint-Gratien would not have been complete without two secretaries of dubious antecedents, and one of them at least an irredeemable rogue. These gentlemen served Dumas by going his errands, carrying about his MSS., negotiating and bargaining—doing his business, and incidentally doing a little on their own account by methods which sometimes discredited their employer. It was always a question of money, but to show the need of money too openly was a fatal policy.

Dumas had at this time no journal of his own, but he contributed a good deal to those of other people, especially those in which his friend Polydore Millaud had an interest. In this same summer he dramatized for the Gaîté theatre his novel *Les Mohicans de Paris*; but some of the political references—the story, it will be remembered, deals with the period 1829—were considered too Radical by the Imperial Censorship, which therefore prohibited the production. Dumas at once appealed to Caesar—in other words, he wrote to the Emperor personally a letter, parts of which are so characteristic as to be worth quotation:

"SIRE,—There were in 1830, and there are still to-day, three men at the head of French literature. These three are Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and myself. Hugo is outlawed, Lamartine is ruined. I cannot be outlawed like Hugo, for nothing in my writings, my life, or my words lends itself to proscription. But I can be ruined like Lamartine, and in fact I am being ruined.

"I know not what ill-will animates the Censorship against me. I have written and published twelve hundred volumes. It is not for me to appreciate their literary value. Translated into every language they have been as far as steam can carry them. Though I am the least worthy of the three authors, my works have made me the most popular, perhaps because the first is a thinker, the second a dreamer, while I —I am only a vulgarizer. Of these twelve hundred volumes there is not one which might not be safely put into the hands of the most republican workman in the Faubourg St. Antoine or read by a young girl of the Faubourg St. Germain, the most modest of our Faubourgs.

"And yet, Sire, in the eyes of the Censors, I am the most immoral man living. (Here follow particulars of various vetoed plays.) . . . Without complaining of the fate of *Les Mohicans de Paris*, I would merely call Your Majesty's attention to the fact that during the six years of Charles X's reign and during the eighteen years of Louis Philippe's I never had a play either interdicted or suspended, and I add —still addressing Your Majesty alone—that it seems to me unfair to make one dramatic author lose half a million francs when encouragement and support are given to so many people who do not deserve the name of dramatists.

"I appeal, then, for the first time and probably for the last, to the Prince whose hand I have had the honour of shaking at Arenenberg, at Ham, and at the Élysée, and who,

having found me a loyal adherent on the path of exile and of captivity, has never found me a place-seeker on that of Empire!

"ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

"August 10, 1864."

This remarkable letter—so curious a mixture of truth and bombast—was effective. The prohibition was removed, and *Les Mohicans* was produced on August 20 with fair success.

In the autumn Dumas moved back to Paris, having taken furnished rooms in the Rue Saint Honoré. It was now that he made his first appearance in a new capacity, giving a lecture on the painter Delacroix, whom he had known intimately in the early days of the Romantic movement. The occasion of this *conférence*—chatty and anecdotal—was an exhibition of Delacroix's pictures, and the experiment succeeded so well that it was repeated. Whether encouraged by this or by another promising scheme, it is clear that Dumas' boyish spirits had for the time revived in full force when he sent this telegram to Jules Janin on the failure of that critic to obtain a chair in the Academy: "Threefold congratulations! You are not the colleague of Doucet, you remain my *confrère*, and you have written a charming article."

The other scheme was a theatrical one—the exploitation of robust melodrama in the populous quarter of the Rue de Lyon, where a large building had lately been erected, ambitiously named the "Grand Théâtre Parisien." Here, a company having been got together, *Les Gardes Forestiers* was produced, based on the story of *Catherine Blum* and suggested by early memories of the forest of Villers-Cotterets. In spite of some success it does not appear that Dumas made

anything by this venture: the theatre had been taken in the name of one of those secretaries already referred to, who managed the accounts too well—for himself. The play was, however, taken into the provinces, among other places to Laon, whither a good many people from the Villers-Cotterets neighbourhood came to see it. Dumas having promised to be present, kept his promise; and arriving some little while after the performance had begun was greeted with an ovation which showed that his own people at least had not forgotten him. Says the *Journal de l'Aisne*—after describing the applause at his entry and his reception by M. le Maire and M. le Préfet—"We all hoped for and expected a little speech from the prince of fiction—our eloquent and witty *causeur*—but our hopes were not realized."

A dramatized version of *Gabriel Lambert*, which only reached twenty-three performances, must be added to the number of disappointments. Another abortive undertaking was an intended historical novel—*Le Comte de Moret*—dealing with a son of Henri IV, which Dumas agreed to supply to the editor of *Les Nouvelles* at the rate—fallen by half since the palmy days—of fifty centimes per line. The novel began well enough, but the author's preoccupations or his growing inertness soon tempted him to substitute for original matter copious extracts from memoirs and historical documents, Readers complained; the editor protested; the offender promised amendment, but had not the energy to join the scattered threads of his story, which came to an untimely end, as also the journal itself. Irregularities and breakdowns like these, weariness, spasmodic effort, a sense of antagonism among the critics of the younger generation—such were the troubles which encompassed Dumas, wiser had he contented himself with the past instead of feverishly striving to be ever in the present and at the front. It was

necessary, he said, to make money by his pen; but this was a sophism. The necessity only arose from his mania for spending and his unwillingness to retrench or adopt a quiet and self-respecting mode of life, for which his income was ample. But he voluntarily embraced illusions. "Imagination," said he one day, "is the most precious of all gifts. Where should we be without it? We should see ourselves as we are, and for many of us the sight would not be pleasant." One of his favourite illusions was that of perpetual youth, which being put into practice led to unseemly conduct, painful to friends and damaging enough to involve something of social ostracism. Without exactly turning their backs on Dumas, a good many people fought shy of him. With the best desire to be indulgent towards the eccentricities of genius, and with all personal cordiality to the great man, it was yet felt that the varieties of mankind —or rather of womankind—likely to be met at his house needed a great deal of facing. For some while after the return to Paris "the Gordosa" was still hanging on, with her easy manners and her attendant *troupe* of small poets and musicians. She called herself "Madame," and by the rights of this title she jealously warded off the approach of possible rivals. Those who were familiar with that interior knew that stormy scenes were frequent—Dumas was a passionate man and sometimes flung the ornaments about. Rejoicings at the departure of "Madame" were interrupted by the unpleasant affair of the Ada Menken photograph and the scandal of an elderly man indulging in a prank which would have been considered silly in a youth. There were other ladies also hovering about Dumas—often women of good social position—whose behaviour will hardly bear narration. Concurrently with these he had visitors of perfect propriety and innocence, whom—to do him justice—

he was equally delighted to see, whether they were men or women. This mixture of respectable and questionable company demanded, it may be imagined, a considerable amount of discretion in the art of "showing in" as practised by the servants in charge of the door. Sometimes—for things went at haphazard—the wrong doors opened, and complications arose which would have been strong for the broadest of Palais-Royal farces.[1] What a pity that Dumas could not put into practice the many maxims he must have known, which all declare that advancing dignity is the best accompaniment of advancing years. Some tried to convince him of this, some—too lightly perhaps—gave up the effort and wrote him down as incorrigible: he himself was always promising to become *rangé*, and even fancied that the *rangement* was accomplished. Time by impairing his physical vigour might have increased his sense of responsibility: as yet it had done neither.

But while for the sake of truth such incidents cannot be ignored or glossed, it would be a mistake to regard them as

[1] See an article of reminiscences in *La Nouvelle Revue* of August, 1899, by a lady who does not mince matters, though writing with great general admiration for Dumas. She describes how one day as a young woman she went by invitation to call upon her old friend—he having known her since she was a baby. This was obviously one of the occasions on which the wrong door opened.

"Je frappai gaiement à cette porte, heureuse de revoir Dumas. Un non moins gai: 'Entrez, entrez,' me répondit. J'ouvris alors et avant que, stupéfaite, je n'eus la pensée de refermer cette porte je vis ceci: l'auteur de Monte Cristo habillé comme je l'avais vue rue Saint-Lazare, d'un fourreau de flanelle rouge, était plongé dans un immense fauteuil au beau milieu de son cabinet de travail. Moitié sur son épaule et moitié sur le dossier du fauteuil une jeune femme, vue de dos, était assise. Une autre, également jeune et vue de face, était installée sur un des bras du siège; et la troisième et dernière était accroupie sur un tapis de fourrure, aux pieds de Dumas.

"Toutes trois, dédaigneuses des idées arriérées de notre civilisation, étaient habillées comme notre mère Ève, avant le péché originel! Je refermai la porte sans rien dire, . . . et je me sauvai."

more than incidental, or as constituting a picture of mere senile depravity. Depravity is a habit, and Dumas was too volatile to be the creature of any habit, bad or good. His closing years present much that is amiable and much that is touching, for, if dignity was absent, pathos abounded.

It was in the beginning of 1866 that he moved into 107, Boulevard Malesherbes—his final home during the remaining part of his life in Paris. Here, in a flat on the fourth floor, he established himself and collected together such few of his household gods as had survived successive *déménagements*. Here, besides the faithful Vasili, he was served by three domestics—a cook, a housemaid, and an Italian valet, Thomaso, who never got nearer the pronunciation of his master's name than "Mozieu Doumaze." In the hall, or antechamber, hung a large picture which Eugène Delacroix had dashed off in three hours, representing a king seated on horseback and counting the dead of the battlefield: this Dumas considered in some way as allegorical of his own fortunes. The library contained about a thousand volumes —works, mostly, of science and history, together with a score or so of presentation books, dedicated to him by George Sand, Hugo, and others, not least interesting among which was a copy of the *Mémoires sur la Chevalière d'Éon*, dedicated to "mon cher maître" by Frédéric Gaillardet, who added under his own name, "l'un des auteurs de la *Tour de Nesle*." For a literary man Dumas' library was modest; but his dining-room was luxurious, adorned with much Bohemian glass and pottery of various sorts; here too was kept in a black velvet case that *serviette* which was religiously guarded in memory of the Duc d'Orléans.

Despite the elegance of these apartments there was no concealing the painful lack of money. The daily earnings did not meet the daily expenditure: ruefully Dumas re-

rded the scantily filled cup which standing on his work ole received the proceeds of each day, and which now dom contained more than two or three *louis*. Still— ought he—who knows what to-morrow may bring? And was always the same avoidance of realities and the same sy-going dislike to refuse any request. One day a Do- ican priest whom he had met in Naples called upon him, d when taking leave suggested a donation to their convent, ich needed funds. Dumas himself, unfortunately, was the same position as the convent—in fact the cup was re. Loth to send his visitor away empty-handed he was ndering ways and means, when suddenly he remembered at the *Grand Journal* owed him for his last article. And with many apologies, he explained the position to the verend father, and asked him if he would mind calling at e office of the paper, which was not far off, and taking th him an order for the amount due, which would be paid presentation. The reverend father of course had no jection. He thanked Dumas, and, proceeding to the ice of the paper, presented the order and received the sh. Thus the monastery was enriched by the proceeds of *causerie* on "The Art of Dressing Salad." Shortly after- rds Dumas was in desperate straits to find the money for ttling two small bills, together not amounting to ten unds.[1]

After the fashion of most unbusinesslike people, he had reat idea of his own business capacity. One scheme which

[1] It is in connexion with the *Grand Journal* that Villemessant—whom the paper belonged—tells a well known story of his friend's pecuniosity. Dumas had promised to write a series of *feuilletons* snakes, and the editor, knowing his habits, offered a payment in vance, which, however, the other proudly declined, saying, "I lly have more money just now than I want." Villemessant's azement was great, but short-lived. Hardly had he got back to

took his fancy at this time was that of a new Théâtre Historique, to be founded by subscription, for which purpose he addressed an appeal, through the papers, to "my friends, known and unknown, in France and abroad." In this prospectus—for in effect it was such, and he naïvely explained that he adopted this method to save the expense of advertising—he expressed his hope of restoring dramatic art to the high level of 1830—"the beautiful, the simple, the true." He himself would support the edifice, or perish beneath the ruins. "But better," he added, "to uphold, like Alcidamus, a falling house than, like Samson, to overthrow a temple, though it be a temple of the Philistines." (The Philistines, in this case, were no doubt the patrons of modern comedy and operetta.) No steps were to be taken until the subscriptions reached half a million of francs. But the public would have nothing to say to this scheme, and Dumas bitterly recognized one more sign of diminished influence and popularity. He had no better success with an appeal which he addressed a few months later to the Emperor requesting a State subvention for the Théâtre du Prince Impérial, which had failed as a circus and which he now proposed to take up and convert into a popular theatre for "the people of the faubourgs." In this letter, making allusion to Louis Napoleon's recent appearance in the field of literature, the writer signed himself "the humble *confrère* of the author of *César*."

his office when Dumas' secretary arrived bringing with him a receipt for "fifteen louis on account," which was duly paid. Next day an instalment of copy arrived with this note: "Be so kind as to hand bearer 192 francs.—A. D."

The same evening a telegram came from Havre: "Please send 400 francs to my house; many thanks.—A. DUMAS."

An hour later a second message corrected the first as follows: "I meant 600 francs, old fellow, not 400. *Feuilleton* on the way.—A DUMAS."

In the summer of 1866 the sensation of the rapid Prusso-Austrian war afforded a topical subject in which Dumas saw the makings of a romance. He went to Frankfort, then to Hanover and Berlin, and visited the battlefields of Langensalza and Sadowa. The result was his interesting story *La Terreur Prussienne*, published in 1867. Next year he published the last of his novels, *Les Blancs et les Bleus*, in which the period (1793–1800) already treated in *Les Compagnons de Jéhu* was resumed. In this story, suggested like the other by Nodier's *Souvenirs de la Révolution*, the early days of Nodier himself are brought in, and the course of history is closely followed in describing the brave deeds of the Republican armies which hurled the Prussians back across the Rhine. Hoche, Pichegru, Saint-Just, Macdonald, Augereau are among the many well known persons who figure in the book, the early part of which obtained, as it appeared in *feuilleton*, a success not unworthy to be compared with that of the great novels of twenty years before. Yet the author was not content, and it is a sign perhaps of failing power that he—of all men—should have confessed to a consciousness of being unable to reach to the height of his subject. "There is in all this," he wrote, "something sublime which I feel myself powerless to depict: one of the greatest sorrows of the poet is to remain—and to know that he remains—below what he feels."

After completing this story Dumas visited Havre in the summer of 1868, and there gave several popular lectures —chiefly on his experiences in Russia—which were repeated at Caen, Dieppe, and Rouen. Returning to Paris in October, encouraged by some measure of success which had attended a stage version of *Madame de Chamblay*, he dramatized the first part of *Les Blancs et les Bleus* for the Châtelet Theatre, where it was produced early the next year.

To his flat in the Boulevard Malesherbes now came his daughter Marie (Madame Petel), who, being separated from her husband, did her best to keep house for her father. This was a great improvement on the Gordosa régime, and Dumas was able to gather his old friends round him without those musical "caterwaulings" (*miaulements*—his own word) which had driven him to take refuge in his study. The friends came gladly—Noel Parfait, Charles Yriarte, Nestor Roqueplan, "Cham" (the Comte de Noé), Desbarolles, and others—for the most part men and women of the past generation, for Dumas was beginning to regard the past as all good and the present as all bad. And so it was always to 1830 that he reverted—a golden age succeeded now by one of lead. Alike in literature and in manners he found decadence—a sure sign that he had outlived his time. One by one the men of his own day were dying off—in 1866 Roger de Beauvoir and Méry, two of his most intimate friends; in 1869 Lamartine—not indeed an intimate friend, but the object of life-long admiration. All these things tended to melancholy, and with financial troubles developed a querulousness quite alien to the Dumas of former days. In one respect unchanged, he divulged his feelings to all comers, with a painful lack of reserve. Sometimes it was against his son or his daughter that he had an imaginary grievance—the one because he was unsympathetic and magistral, the other because she was too much given to piety. Sometimes he was very bitter about the visitors who helped themselves to his belongings. "I would not mind," he said, "if only they would leave me a twenty-franc piece." But that it was his own fault for having friends (*amies*) of this sort he never seemed to realize.

The buoyant spirit he had once boasted was no longer with him; and his views of men and things, coloured by

his own misfortunes, had become pessimistic. Usually so generous in his judgments he could now find nothing to praise in brother authors, whether in France or elsewhere. Such a mood alone will explain how, when the conversation happened to fall upon Dickens, whom somebody was extolling, Dumas dogmatically intervened with "That Dickens is just a very proud gentleman who thinks nothing of others and everything of himself"—a remark so irrelevant that the speaker would probably not have thanked the candid friend who noted and preserved it.[1] From the same source we have an anecdote of Dumas which illustrates so capitally the vicissitudes of his life and the varieties of his humour that it deserves a better fate than the condensation it must here undergo.

The time was 1868. The lady on reaching Dumas' house found her old friend in bed—in his study converted into a bedroom—and very sorry for himself. He was poorly, and unable to take anything but a decoction of lime-juice and barley-water. The servants, he complained, had all gone out and left him alone.

"'I have been calling in vain for Nathalie to bring me some barley-water. Who opened the door to you?'

"'No one,' I replied, 'the door was not shut.'

"After a minute or two he begged me to get him the drink he wanted. The kitchen was deserted and the fire out. However, I managed to make up some fire, and brought him what he wanted. He drank it, and was very grateful to me.

"His face was in a sad state—some skin eruption, which made it all swollen and shiny. But he informed me that he had to get up and go to a reception at some Ambassador's that evening. I could hardly believe that he was serious,

[1] *Alexandre Dumas, père—Mes Souvenirs sur lui.* By Madame Mathilde Shaw (*La Nouvelle Revue*, August 1899).

and I told him that in his present condition he was not fit to meet any one.

" ' Nonsense,' he said, ' just look in that chest of drawers and see if you can find me some linen and a white tie.'

" I looked and searched thoroughly : the total contents were two nightshirts, a black waistcoat, a pair of flannel drawers, and a red tie. In reply to my inquiries I told him the result of my search.

" ' It is monstrous,' he exclaimed, ' the way they neglect me when I am ill ! How on earth am I to get dressed ? ' Then, after reflection, he added : ' Just look, child, in that writing-desk,' indicating the drawer where he used to put his gold when he had any. I looked and found it completely empty. To convince him I brought the drawer and showed it to him.

" ' Ah ! ' he said with a sigh, ' yes, I remember.'

" Then he asked me if I had any money with me and could lend him a little, to which of course I said yes.

" ' Just enough to get me a dress shirt,' he explained ; ' and if you would be so very kind as to take a cab at once and go and buy me one. But be sure and don't come back empty-handed.' "

The lady undertook the commission, and as it was now nearly 8 p.m. made all haste to anticipate the closing of the shops. Several establishments were visited in vain : they all had shirts, but not of the large size which Dumas required. Madame was getting desperate. At last she lighted on a haberdasher's where they advertised " the Hercules shirt " as their speciality. Entering she found that only one article of the necessary dimensions remained in stock, and this was not a white but a coloured shirt. The idea of a coloured shirt for an evening party was not promising, and when produced it proved to be not only coloured, but

coloured most fantastically—evidently intended as a striking design for some *bal costumé* of the Quartier Latin. The ground of it was white, and hereon were depicted bright red demons jumping about in flames of yellow fire. Such was the front of the shirt, which—remembering Dumas' parting words about not coming back empty-handed—Madame bought and conveyed with no slight trepidation to the Boulevard Malesherbes. Preparing the way by an account of her fruitless quest, she at length opened the parcel. Dumas gazed for a few moments with blank horror upon those scarlet devils and those yellow flames. Then—as the storm follows the calm—he burst into one of his frantic passions, but subsiding soon to the necessity of the case he recalled Madame from the door, to which she had retreated, and saying curtly, "Well, I shall have to wear it," he bade her wait, and went into the dressing-room to make his toilette. Before long he reappeared clad in his dress suit, the low waistcoat of which displayed to full advantage the peculiarities of the shirt front. He had forgotten the tie—they had both forgotten it: the only tie was that red one we have mentioned. Donned, it completed the costume in which, sulky and silent, Dumas got into the cab and drove off to the reception.

A few days later a note came from him asking the lady to call, as he had much to tell her. On arriving she found him recovered and radiant. "You would hardly believe it," he said, "but my costume was an immense success. Everyone thought that it was an original idea of my own! They all thronged round me and made much of me; I really think that I have started a fashion, which will take, of going to evening parties in coloured linen."

"What about the red necktie?" asked she.

"Oh, that was another success! It was supposed to be

a *souvenir* of my friendship for Garibaldi. On the whole I had a most delightful evening."

And so once more the big man with the simple childish heart rejoiced.

It was perhaps nearly for the last time. The variations of mood, which became more marked in the later years, had, it will be understood, their corresponding physical conditions. Throughout his life Dumas had made full use of a marvellous constitution. Whether in work or in amusement he had lived—as we say—at high pressure : relaxation, inactivity, were unknown pleasures. He was moderate and select in the matter of food, in drink abstemious : if he did not control sleep as some men have done, he at any rate dispensed with it without hurt : for thirty years his average of sleep had been about four hours out of the twenty-four. Nature may have felt the strain, but she seldom rebelled or revenged herself in the form of any serious illness. Only, in the last decade of his life, Dumas became subject to feverish attacks, recurring about once in a year, during which he took to his bed and lay with his face to the wall in a drowsy stupor, interrupted only by occasional sips of lemonade. Thus Nature claimed her arrears of repose, and after a day or two the constitution used to right itself.[1]

But towards the end of 1868 a change was apparent, which to outsiders seemed a sudden drop from vigour to decay. A corpulence more than healthy, a feebleness of the legs, a lethargy which became chronic—these were the marks of senescence. It was observed, too, that the man whose rest-

[1] Dumas' health was well known, and stood firm against the almost wanton tests he imposed upon it. In the midst of one of the cholera epidemics his son found him seated alone and devouring *several melons*. "Don't you trouble," he said in reply to exclamations of horror, "this is just the right time to eat them—you can get them for nothing."

less activity had been proverbial no longer cared for movement or change, but would sit for hours together in his armchair, by way of writing, in reality drowsy and somnolent During the rehearsals of *Les Blancs et les Bleus* one of the actors came round to see the author and discuss with him certain details of the rendering : in the midst of their conversation he noticed that Dumas ceased to reply and had fallen asleep.

Alarmed by such symptoms the son and the daughter sought medical advice, and tried one or two suggested treatments. But the doctors, recognizing no doubt that the candle was nearly burned out, could recommend nothing more definite than that the invalid should be allowed to vegetate, in pure air and sunshine away from Paris. In accordance with this advice the summer of 1869 was spent at Roscoff, a small seaside place in Brittany, and a temporary improvement showed itself. But a return to Paris in the autumn and an attempted resumption of work brought back all the bad symptoms : there was no actual pain, but the condition was one of torpor physical and mental. Then only did Dumas recognize that his race was nearly run. The illusion of youth was shattered at last : in its place came the tears and laments of one who, unfortified by philosophy and unconsoled by religion, sees approach the inevitable hour. Conscious that he was now an object of pity instead of admiration, the old man seldom left the house. Even at his own fireside he found little to mitigate distress. The cessation of power to work meant the cessation of income, and a precarious daily life had to be supported by loans from the publisher or advances from the dramatic agent. Even so there were the creditors—some forbearing enough, others rapacious and importunate ; there were the usual household bills and the usual demands from the needy.

Often it taxed all the inventiveness of the faithful Vasili to find the materials of a dinner for his master. When pressure increased some article or other was taken to the pawnbroker's ; at other times the secretary, Victor Leclerc—one of the best of men—used to call on Dumas *fils*, who always gave willingly whatever was wanted. And lest any one should wonder that, with a son so prosperous, the father should be in such straits, it has to be explained that the one person from whom the elder Dumas always tried to conceal his difficulties was his son. The truth was that, just as he had resented as unsympathetic the efforts which his son had made to bring him to an orderly and prudent life, so now he was ashamed to disclose the consequences of good advice neglected. For some while past Dumas *fils*, unable either to approve or to improve his father's establishment, had kept aloof from it ; the father, on his side, whenever he appealed to his son, was careful not to reveal the full extent of his necessity. When this could no longer be concealed the younger man, recognizing that the time for admonition was past, took upon himself, lovingly and cheerfully, the duty of tending and comforting the elder.

Thus the gloomy winter of 1869–1870 passed. Dumas, living—as clouded brains do—chiefly in the past, showed himself now and then anxious for the future ; would his name live, and would any of all his works survive ? Long ago, light-heartedly, he had promised himself that whenever he could find leisure he would give himself the satisfaction of reading his own romances. Alas ! he had plenty of leisure now. Like most men who write rapidly he soon forgot what he had written, and was able to approach it with fresh interest. One day he was found—a pathetic sight—immersed in *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*.

" Well, what do you think of it ? " they said.

"Oh, not bad, but not nearly so good as that"—pointing to a copy of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, which lay near and which he had been reading before.

In the spring of 1870 the invalid went to the South of France, but returned to the capital at the end of July, just after the declaration of war with Prussia. His health was no better: he was suffering in general from softening of the brain; there were also dropsical symptoms, and the possibility of an apoplectic attack had to be guarded against. When the siege of Paris became imminent it seemed imperative to remove him from harm's way. And so about the middle of September he was taken by his son and his daughter to the peaceful hamlet—as it then was—of Puys, near Dieppe, where the younger Dumas had built himself a house, on the recommendation of Madame Sand, who had discovered Puys. Here in a large room, with windows opening on the sea, the old man was installed: everything was done for him, helpless now to do anything for himself. At first, while the weather remained fine and warm, he was wheeled out every day to the beach and sat comfortably basking in the sun. But with the coming of October, high winds, cold and damp sea mists confined him to the house. There for the greater part of the day he slept in his arm-chair, free from pain, simply torpid in body and in mind, rousing himself at intervals to play dominoes with his grandchildren[1] or to talk a little with his son. His conversation always went back to the past: the present, and any allusions to the disasters which were crowding thick on France were carefully barred. Frequently he recurred to the labour of his life—all those books which he had written or superintended. He wanted to be immortal by his works, and he

[1] Mlles. Colette Dumas and Jeannine Dumas, by whose families the recognized line of the great novelist is perpetuated.

was uneasy to think that this might not be. Half dreaming, he seemed to see a huge pyramid rising above him, tottering and falling. Was this an omen of evil? But when his son had answered, truthfully at once and cheeringly, that anxious question "Will anything of mine survive?" then, satisfied, he dozed again, to dream this time of a pyramid firm from base to top, and bearing the proud legend of the poet, *Non omnis moriar.*

On the thoughts of such a man in such a case conjecture is apt to make itself busy. He whose imagination had travelled so far and wide—what were now his imaginings? What regrets for the past were present, what fears for the future? Did he wish to begin again, and did he see too late that while approving the better course he had followed the worse? Such speculations, however much they lend themselves to a vein of moralizing sentiment, are generally beside the mark. So far as science and observation can inform us, we know that maladies, in which brain failure equals or outruns that of other functions, are mercifully free from pangs of memory or anticipation. Life declines into mere existence, and the blunted faculties preclude torment. Such in the main was Dumas' condition in the two or three months preceding his death. The direction of his thoughts at moments when the mind was active has already been indicated. For the rest he was placid, content with the small satisfaction of small needs, as one to whom the absence of pain or worry has become a positive pleasure. He had left the fever of life behind to find a repose unknown and undesired in all the years before. He did not wish it otherwise. When the wind outside whistled and moaned and the others grumbled at the rough weather, he said, "I love the wind—I have always loved it: it prevents me from thinking." When they asked him if he would like to be up

again and resuming his work he said, with a gentle smile, "There is no fear of that: I am too comfortable as I am."

Rumours of his condition had reached the outside world, but little was known for certain, and men's minds were too much occupied with the war to trouble about lesser things. In some quarters he was represented—quite untruly—to have sunk into mere idiocy; and it was rather as a protest against this that a few weeks before his death Alfred Asseline published in *L'Indépendance Belge* the article already referred to. In reply to this article the younger Dumas wrote a letter of thanks, in which he emphasized the present serenity and comfort of the invalid. "My father is simply resting," he said; "*procumbit humi bos:* the tired ox falls down in his furrow and waits for his strength to return; so my father, overworked and overwrought, has dropped his pen and turned to sleep." Dated from Puys on November 23—less than a fortnight before the end—this letter indicates no immediate fear of a fatal result: probably it was meant to put a stop to the gossiping curiosity about his father which the son so much deprecated and resented. By this time at any rate the patient was confined to his room, and his condition had become hopeless: barely could he move from his bed to his armchair, and soon that effort became too great. It is said that Dumas, when he left Paris for the last time, brought with him all his worldly wealth in the shape of a single gold piece, which he solemnly deposed on the mantelpiece of his room at Puys. One day, towards the end, his eye wandered to this coin, which had remained untouched, and pointing to it he said to his son: "See there! Fifty years ago when I came to Paris I had one *louis* in my possession. Why have people accused me of being a prodigal? I have preserved it and possess it still—look, there it is!" Such was the last jest of Alexandre Dumas, and a

melancholy one. Gradually the comatose state grew more continuous, until in the night between December 4 and 5 an apoplectic seizure took away consciousness, and no remedies could relieve the congested brain. Some while ago Dumas had made his daughter promise that she would not let him be overtaken by death without receiving the last rites of religion. And so Madame Petel sent at once to Dieppe for the Abbé Andrieu, who arrived in the course of the morning. When the priest, in administering the Sacrament, addressed him by name, the dying man by a slight quiver of the eye seemed to indicate partial consciousness; but no word followed, either then or during the hours he lingered on. It was about ten at night when he ceased to breathe, having lived sixty-eight years four months and twelve days.

That same day, December 5, the Prussians had occupied Dieppe; but even in that humiliation the townspeople felt the death of their distinguished neighbour as an added calamity. At the funeral, which took place on December 8 in the cemetery of Neuville, the Town Council was represented by five of its members. The crowd which thronged the church and the graveyard was a numerous but not a distinguished one, very different from what it would have been in a less distressful state of national affairs. After a few cordial and patriotic speeches the burial office was said, the coffin lowered, and Nature reclaimed one of the forces she had lent to the world.

This interment at Neuville was only temporary, necessitated by the circumstances of the moment: it had always been intended that Dumas should rest, according to his own desire, in his native place. Sixteen months later, on April 16, 1872, when the country was clear of the enemy and had resumed its normal appearance, a more honourable and less

grievous funeral was held at Villers-Cotterets, whither the remains had been transferred. That ceremony was, indeed, a festival rather than a mourning. Never had the little town been more crowded. Besides the people of the place and the neighbourhood anxious to do honour to their illustrious townsman, the train from Paris brought down many celebrities of literature, art and drama—among others Émile de Girardin, Edmond About, Baron Taylor, Meissonier, Regnier, Got, Bressant, Febvre, Auguste Maquet. From this numerous assemblage Victor Hugo's presence was missed. He explained, in a letter to Dumas *fils*, that he was detained in Paris by illness in his family ; and in the letter, after eulogizing the genius of his deceased friend, he ended with these more personal words : " Your father and I were young together : I loved him and he me. Alexandre Dumas was as great in heart as he was in intellect, a loyal and noble soul. I had not seen him since 1857, when he came to my abode of exile in Guernsey, and we there vowed to meet one another again in the future and in our native land. In September of 1870 the moment came for my return to France. Alas ! the same wind produces contrary effects. When I came back to Paris Alexandre Dumas had just left it. It was not my privilege to grasp his hand for the last time, and to-day I miss being present at this last rite. But his soul sees mine. In a few days I shall be able, I hope, to do what I cannot do at this moment : I shall go, alone, to the grave where his body rests, and I shall return at his tomb the visit which he paid me in my exile."[1] The ceremony of reinterment was accompanied by speeches, and then Dumas was laid to his

[1] It is a pity, all the same, that Hugo did not manage to get to Villers-Cotterets on April 16. Perhaps there was a little unpleasantness in the affair, for it is well known that Dumas *fils* by no means shared his father's enthusiasm for the " great poet," and it is note-

final rest in the cemetery of Villers-Cotterets, in a plot of ground sheltered by tall fir trees. There, side by side, are three plain slabs of stone—one for General Dumas Davy de la Pailleterie, the second for his wife, and the third for their son, who is described simply as "Alexandre Dumas."

Of posthumous honours the first was the performance (in December 1871) of a verse play called *L'Éloge d'Alexandre Dumas*. Next came the public tribute paid to his father by the younger Dumas on the occasion of taking his seat in the French Academy (February 11, 1875).

"The fact," said he, "that so many men superior to me have had to knock many times at your door before it was opened to them would fill me with pride, did I not know the real reason of your sympathy. In order to reach my place among you, gentlemen, I have employed magical spells, I have used witchcraft. Standing on my own merits alone I should not have dared to face your judgment, but I knew that a good genius—that is the right word—was fighting on my behalf, and that you were determined to offer no defence. I have sheltered myself under a name which you would have wished long ago to honour in itself, and which you are now able to honour only in me. Believe me, gentlemen, it is with the greatest modesty that I come to-day to accept a reward which has been so easily granted to me only because it was reserved for another. I cannot—I may not—receive it except in trust; allow me then, at once and publicly, to make restitution of it to the man who, unhappily, can no longer receive it himself. Thus you will be granting me the highest honour which I can covet, and the only one to which I have any real right."

worthy that the letter quoted above begins thus: "I learn *from the papers* that the funeral of Alexandre Dumas is to take place,' etc., etc., which shows that Hugo had not received an invitation.

This eloquent elaboration of the simple theme "I am my father's son" must have produced on the assembled Academicians—many of them conscious of having cold-shouldered the author of *Les Trois Mousquetaires*—something of what the newspapers describe as a "sensation." The Comte d'Haussonville, to whom fell the delicate task of replying, while he deprecated altogether the theory of vicarious honour, declared at the same time that if the elder Dumas had not become a member of the Academy it was only because he had never applied in due form for election. "Our regulations," said he, "prevent us from giving our votes except to a candidate who testifies, in writing, his wish to join us. Your illustrious father would doubtless have obtained these votes had he asked for them; but, like Balzac, Béranger, Lamennais, and so many others, he preferred to remain what you have called 'an outside Academician.'"

Some polite sophistry of this sort was perhaps inevitable, though it must have stirred more than one furtive smile. For Dumas—as we have mentioned—had in the course of his career put out several feelers, and if he did not press his candidature to the point of a formal letter it was simply because he shrank from the mortification of being rejected.

Apart, however, from Academical sentiment, it began to be felt, though after too long a time, that there should be some public recognition by France of a Frenchman whose name had gone out into all lands and his books to the end of the world. A movement was therefore started—on the initiative of M. Villard, a distinguished engineer and a member of the Paris Municipal Council—for raising by public subscription that monument in stone and bronze with which, standing in the Place Malesherbes, every visitor to Paris is familiar. That the committee which had charge of the

scheme was an influential and representative one is shown by such names as Augier, Daudet, Feuillet, Gounod, Legouvé, Meilhac, Meissonier, Saint Victor, Sardou, Jules Verne. The subscriptions ultimately reached £2,500—an amount which sufficed, with the services given by Gustave Doré, to raise a not unworthy memorial. Dumas is represented sitting with a book in his left hand and a pen in his right; in front of the pedestal are three figures—a young woman represented as reading, and two men—one of them in workman's garb, the idea being to indicate the popularity of the author among all classes. At the back is a fine figure of D'Artagnan in Musketeer costume. The unveiling[1] took place on November 4, 1883; speeches were delivered by Albert Kaempfen (Directeur des Beaux Arts), Camille Doucet (representing the Commission des Auteurs dramatiques), Jules Claretie, Edmond About, and others; and on the same day poems were recited at the Théâtre Français, the Odéon, and one or two other theatres.

In order not to clash with the Paris monument, a scheme already afoot for a local memorial in Villers-Cotterets was suspended for the time: afterwards it was resumed, and the statue of Dumas in his native place, standing at the top of the street named after him, was inaugurated in the spring of 1885. At the present moment (July, 1902), the centenary of his birth—which Paris, surfeited perhaps by recent Hugolatry, seems to recognize but little—is being celebrated with festivals in Villers-Cotterets, mindful ever and proud of the rare man whom it sent forth to run his race and received back when the race was run.

[1] For particulars of the ceremony and of the monument see *Le Monument d'Alexandre Dumas* (published in 1884).

CHAPTER XII

THE REAL DUMAS AND OTHERS

BEGIN with the others: they are numerous. First, there is the Dumas who was born in 1803, as many works of general information—including the *Dictionnaire Larousse*—have falsely reported. By a singular inadvertence—so persistent is error—this was the date which originally appeared on the monument in the Place Malesherbes: since then it has been corrected.[1] It is reasonable to attribute the origin of this mistake to the ambiguity of the Republican Calendar, responsible for many similar confusions. "On the fifth day of Thermidor in year x. of the French Republic"—so runs the *acte de naissance* of Dumas; and only on the supposition that the first year of the Republic began on September 22, 1793, would year x. be 1803. But, in fact, the first year was considered to *end*, not to *begin*, on September 22, 1793, so that year x. would be 1802. There is no shadow of doubt that Alexandre Dumas was born on July 24, 1802, as indeed is expressly stated in the certificate of his death.

Next among the curiosities of perversion may be noted a statement often circulated during his lifetime to the effect that he was not born in wedlock—a fiction which was trans-

[1] But the place where Dumas died still remains as *Puits* instead of the ordinary spelling *Puys*.

ferred to him from the uncertainty attending the birth of his father, the General.

It was to be expected, perhaps, that Dumas would be commonly referred to as a " negro " or a " mulatto," even by people who knew better ; but it is just as well to be ethnically correct and to put on record the fact that he was neither the one nor the other, but a " quadroon "—the " immortal quadroon " was it Rossetti who called him ?

On this subject there is an amusing chapter in the *Histoire de mes Bêtes*, in which Dumas tells how he fell in one day with a remarkable cab-driver, who seemed to know every possible fact about the department of the Aisne and the town of Villers-Cotterets. Interested in all this accurate erudition, the novelist—who did not disclose his identity—after hearing that Villers-Cotterets was the native place of Demoustier, ventured to add, " And of Alexandre Dumas ? " " You mean the author of *Monte Cristo* ? " said the *cocher*. Dumas nodded. " No," replied the man, " he was not born at Villers-Cotterets—not he."

" Really," protested the other, " that is a little bit strong."

" Have it as you like," said cabby. " Alexandre Dumas does not belong to Villers-Cotterets. Besides, *he is a negro !* "

Eventually it appeared that the man had no personal knowledge of those parts and had never been there, but derived all his information from a book of statistics about the department of the Aisne—his sole literary possession, which he carried under the cushion of his box-seat and perused again and again while waiting on the rank. No wonder that Dumas somewhere observes, " There is no man in the world the facts of whose life have been so much contested as mine."

Sometimes the facts have been enriched by a glowing

fancy. Here is an extract from an American magazine of 1834, in which the writer solemnly asserts that "Alexandre Dumas is a wonderful example of precocious talents. Left an orphan at the age of fifteen, he distinguished himself thus early at the College of St. Barbe in all his classes, and at eighteen graduated—one of its most brilliant ornaments"! That good young man is very far removed from the Alexandre we know.

These are but specimens—heaven forbid that we should attempt more!—of error in humble and commonplace details. A fatal obliquity on such matters seems, indeed, to attend whatever is said about Dumas. One of the best informed of French writers, after giving the date of his death, adds that he was seventy years of age. Without desiring to fetter literature with the pedantry of arithmetic, there seems no reason for departing from the ordinary methods of calculating the interval between 1802 and 1870. Nor, again, except for that same fatality, can we understand why a fluent and appreciative writer should have recently slipped into describing the novelist as "scribbling his pages of manuscript over the cigar and the absinthe in the café[1]—a picture only marred by the fact that Dumas neither smoked cigars nor imbibed absinthe. Or here is another description, penned some forty years ago. "If you should go to Paris and chance in some of the streets to meet a great boy about five feet four inches in height, having a physiognomy resembling that of a negro and an olive complexion, his costume being distinguished by some peculiarity such as a light-yellow under-waistcoat or a riband of various colours depending from his button-hole, speaking loudly and gesticulating fiercely, as if he was quarrelling

[1] *Quarterly Review* for October, 1899, article "Scott and his French Pupils."

instead of conversing with a friend, you may go boldly up to him and say, 'How do you do, M. Dumas?'" The picturesque details of manner, costume, and face are all very well; but "a great boy of five feet four" can hardly be commended as applicable to a man who stood nearly six feet in his stockings.

A similar tendency, if not to absolute error, at least to overstrained and misleading language, may be found in many periodicals—English and American. To dilate, for example, on the early difficulties of Dumas, to speak of him when he came to Paris as not knowing how to keep body and soul together, as "driven by the pangs of hunger," and as succeeding only after a long and desperate struggle—all this is only metaphorically correct. He had, of course, to live narrowly and to work, and to meet some disappointments; but his time of working and waiting was—comparatively with most men who have become famous—phenomenally short. And just as early penury has been exaggerated, so also later opulence. No one can say with any approach to certainty how much Dumas was making in the prosperous years between 1843 and 1850, but to put it—as it has been put—at forty thousand pounds a year is to multiply it at least by two.[1]

Passing from simple misstatements of fact to the less tangible sphere of opinions based on more or less of reality, consider next the host of judgments, mostly epithetical, which have the merit—the doubtful merit—of being partially true. *Blagueur*, *farceur*, *poseur*, foppish, garrulous, vain,

[1] It must be remembered that theatrical receipts and the profits of dramatists were very modest in those days comparatively to what they have since become. The elder Dumas made vast sums by his novels, but little by his plays—not so much nearly as his son.

disreputable, dishonest, profligate—the damnatory words come in whole battalions: the character of poor Dumas has presented a spacious target for the arrows of the ninety and nine. Not one of these epithets but may be justified and illustrated, and yet their heedless accumulation—or their arrangement in such a way as to imply that they are exhaustive—is apt to be more misguiding than the barest of fictions. There is always the other side of the balance to be considered; there is always the question to be answered how such a monster could have inspired so much friendship and admiration. Then all the countervailing virtues have to be flung into the scale, beginning with George Sand's *foncièrement bon*, until a problem results so intricate that one has to take refuge in the inscrutability of human nature. Temperate judgments on Dumas were rare in his lifetime—let us admit, he did not invite them: everything, whether praise or blame, was laid on with a trowel. That was the old style: since then, with time and the growth of the critical spirit, a more judicial method has come into fashion. Hence the temperamental Dumas, studied physiologically, as the product of certain instincts shaped by certain surroundings. There is much that is charming in this view, besides its undoubted scientific orthodoxy; nor does any one in this day doubt the importance of outside influences in determining human character. It will still, however, be felt that all such appreciations tend too much to abstraction and impersonality: they revert ultimately to the "force of Nature" theory, and they substitute Dumas the phenomenon for Dumas the man. The process, while it smooths away difficulties and mitigates harshness, remains essentially an apology—charitable but inconclusive, true so far as it goes but not comprehensive, admirable for whatever concerns the fire and the whirlwind, but knowing nothing of the still

small voice which can hardly be ignored in the moral judgments of men.

And yet without subscribing wholly to the fatalist blending of moral and physical, it is possible to gain much illumination from Michelet's oft-quoted tribute. Dumas was clearly as striking an example as any theologian could desire of the state of nature as opposed to the state of grace. Whatever good qualities were his in youth, these he preserved in maturity: whatever faults time and experience usually correct, these stood uncorrected. The propensions of the natural man grew, the powers of his intellect expanded, his moral sense remained inchoate. At sixty years he had the apparent inconscience which we expect at six. It would be agreeable to recognize in such a case the working of some obscure and irresponsible force, not to be measured by ordinary standards; but there is no reason for resorting to this subterfuge, nor any means of evading the fact that Dumas, separating the theory of conduct from its practice, chose to regard life as a playground in which Providence had ordained that he should disport himself, not selfishly indeed—for he rejoiced with the glad and wept with the sorrowful—but irreflectively. His principle was "Live and let live, but above all do not stop and do not think." If ever he paused to reflect he may have applied to his own case the theory he applied to Napoleon and others—that the great man is a law to himself; generally, he was satisfied to be conscious of good-will towards all men and a heart responsive to every generous emotion. No one—and this is the worst that can be said of him—took his vices more cheerfully or more as a matter of course: not less so his virtues, which were those of the heroes of his own romances —courage, loyalty, chivalry, *galanterie*. The one thing lacking was a sense of obligation in the daily affairs of life—

lacking because uncultivated, uncultivated because tiresome. "Duty," said the younger Dumas in one of his aphorisms, "is what we require of others." "Duty," the elder Dumas might have said, "is what we think about when ill, or are reminded of by creditors." Uncontrolled by this force, his life swung from sentiment to sensation, from sensation to sentiment; towards the end, from distress and discomfort arose—vexation first, then a sense of shame, finally regret, and perhaps even repentance.

Such is the bad side of Dumas, unvarnished: such is nature unredeemed by grace, either religious or prudential. Extenuations abound, always on the understanding that to explain a tendency is not to excuse an action. The strain of tropical blood inherited from his grandmother, though diluted by the modest bravery of his father and the sober simplicity of his mother, must have counted for something in the character of Dumas, as it did in his physical appearance. Vanity and love of display inhere in coloured races, as in children. Then, the circumstances of early life must be remembered, and that absence of control which—while by stimulating the boy's imagination it may have benefited the world—was in his own interests a poor substitute for careful education. The first difficult period of Paris life involved, no doubt, a discipline in restraint, but this period ended too soon in a triumph of success the more intoxicating because it came as a sudden reaction. Henceforward—the words are Villemessant's—"success, which is an accident in the life of most men, became to him an every-day companion: he was the king of Paris, a sovereign by intellect and wit, the only man who for a century had made himself the idol of all classes of society, from the Faubourg Saint Germain to the Marais and Les Batignolles." And with success came applause and flattery and whatever else spoils,

and the need of popularity, and the adoption of popularity as the sole standard of good.

References to the particular from of flattery involved in relations with women have been frequent in this book—too frequent, perhaps, it may seem to some. But no one with any knowledge of the subject can fail to perceive that the Woman-element was an all-important factor in the composition of the real Dumas. The distraction or outlet—moral or physical—which different men find in different ways he found chiefly in the society and intercourse of the other sex. The feminine atmosphere—the presence of woman—became a necessary part of his life. Not, unfortunately, the same woman, nor yet the better sort of woman, but a succession of more or less " sketchy " ladies, each of whom had her day and hour and was then supplanted by another. Had Dumas been an Oriental potentate, or a patriarch of ancient Israel, or a Mormon of modern times, he might at fancy have added a fresh face to the collection without disturbance : under existing conditions all he could do was to dethrone one queen before enthroning the next, and dethronement was often an unpleasant and costly business. But whichever of them came or went, the type was always the same : it was always that of the mistress whose normal object is to please and flatter and get as much out of it as she can. Worse influence for such a temperament than this perpetual empire of frocks and frills cannot be imagined : it was the more baneful because Dumas—and the fact demands emphasis—was not a mere vulgar *coureur des femmes*, with whom animalism is the beginning and the end. He was always deeply in love with the lady of the moment : she was adored as well as adorable : the attachment was sentimental quite as much as sensual. It was necessary, however, for him to feel that the woman was an

inferior—a complement, in his view, and a seasoning of man—a creature who ought to be fascinating but not talented; and therefore the higher types of feminine character and intellect were not those which influenced him. Many such there were, of course, with whom he was on terms of friendship and familiarity through community of tastes or the usage of society; but these were not determining factors. Possibly they might have been more so had they chosen: one cannot but suspect that expostulation, in most cases, was playful rather than earnest. The world is selfish, and the world—women and men—preferred to spoil Dumas because Dumas spoilt was infinitely entertaining. A man may be his own worst enemy, but he may also suffer from the want of friends sufficiently candid to make themselves disagreeable for his good.

Bad as such things sound, they argue no special depravity. There are plenty of people who make exceptions in favour of themselves, and thereby cause a vast amount of undivulged mischief and misery. The difference consists in the person and the scale. So much disorder of life is not often found in combination with so much genius, nor, when it is, is there any disposition to proclaim it from the housetops. In Dumas' case everything was magnified and made public—by himself: that was his own singularity of taste, his own vanity or infatuation. He is perhaps the only instance of a conspicuously gifted man who—in whatever he wrote about himself—has voluntarily supplied all the stones for others to fling at him: he would rather be stoned than unnoticed. Such candour is the extreme form of megalomania, but it would lose most of its interest were it not mixed with a simplicity and a credulity which no experience of life ever managed to undo. That absence of worldly wisdom is one reason why contemporaries made excuses

for Dumas, and why posterity shrinks from judging him harshly.

Another is that he had some virtues which cover a multitude of sins. Here negations again suggest themselves: it is much easier to say what the man was not than to define what he was. For one thing he certainly was not—as Eugène de Mirecourt and other traducers made him out—a toady and hanger-on of Royal persons. According to this theory, Dumas regretted bitterly his breach with Louis Philippe, and tried, by sedulously courting first the Duc d'Orléans and then the Duc de Montpensier, to creep back into the favour and notice of the King. On this assumption it is at least remarkable that he should have published to the world the fullest account of his relations with the Orleans family at a time (1852) when that family had disappeared from France, and when there was nothing to gain and everything to lose by advertising a friendship with any of its members. The self-interested place-hunter knows better than that. So far, indeed, from fawning on the powers that be, Dumas exhibited the curious unworldliness of adhering to people in obscurity or adversity and quarrelling with them only when they had come into power, as happened in the case both of Louis Philippe and of Louis Napoleon. His friendship with the Orleans princes, or with any princes, was natural enough to one who loved appreciation and display; no doubt also it pleased him to fondle the contrast between Dumas the Republican disapproving of Royalty and Dumas the poet associating with it as an equal. There may have been in all this a good deal of egotism and false sentiment, but there was nothing of the sycophant. Sycophancy implies a calculation which was wholly alien to this man's nature. No one, in fact, ever showed—whether in his conduct or in his writings—a more quixotic attachment

to " lost causes, forsaken beliefs, and impossible loyalties " : the conquering cause may have pleased the gods, but it was the conquered which always commanded the sympathy of Dumas. Politically, then, there is nothing to his discredit : he was loyal and consistent to an extent which alone might suffice to show that he could never have succeeded as a politician. Like all men whose early days were passed in the red glow of the Napoleonic sunset he cherished the memory of a glorious and all-powerful France ; but he had no expectation or desire of another Napoleon, and no wavering in his belief that Republicanism was both the ideal and the destined form of government.

Then there is another unreal Dumas who has to be dislodged in order that the true one may appear : that is Dumas the atheist and materialist, the denier of the soul and of God. This impression, though perhaps not widespread or much emphasized, has been conveyed by at least one of the many sketches of Dumas,[1] and it has sufficient plausibility to make it worth correction. The pretence of any practical religion would of course be ridiculous : we are dealing with the question of belief. With Dumas, as with most of the Romantics, religion and poetry were convertible terms, and the supernatural was a reality if only because it was necessary to literature. " Atheist " and " materialist," then, which imply some positive antagonism, are quite beside the mark : " sceptic " or " agnostic," though more appropriate, indicate perhaps a rather too cool and judicial attitude, as well as an amount of thought which Dumas probably never gave to the subject. The charge of atheism is chiefly based on the preface of *Antony*, in which he wrote " Je pourrais, pour son sang, t'abandonner ma vie et mon âme—si j'y croyais ! "—tempestuous words

[1] *Alexandre Dumas en manches de chemise*: By B. Pifteau.

which he afterwards regretted, and explained that he had written them in a passion. Against this and a few other rebellious fist-shakings in the face of the Deity may be set the pious tone of the verses in which he spoke about his mother's death, or the words which occur in the dedication of *La Conscience*, "I believe in the immortality of the soul." And, generally, it is clear that religion was with him—as with many others—partly a reluctance to discard old beliefs without any substitute for them, partly an affair of emotion and emergency—a sentiment which lies somewhere down below in the ordinary course of life, but rises bubbling to the surface in moments of great joy or great sorrow. Thankfully he refers more than once to the protection of Heaven, as thus: "I know not what good deed I have done, either in this world or in other worlds where I may have existed before coming into this, but God has been very gracious to me, and in every critical position of my life He has visibly come to my aid. And therefore with all boldness and yet with all humility I confess His name before believers and before sceptics, and in doing so I have not even the merit of faith, but simply that of truth."

Nor is there any need to blame for hypocrisy one who said: "Heaven forbid that I should pose as a man of religious observances, but my education and the influences of my early life have imbued—I will not say my actions, but all my beliefs and opinions with so deep a tinge of religious feeling that I cannot, even at my present time of life, enter a church without taking holy water, or pass before a crucifix without making the sign of the cross."

Elsewhere he has recorded how, in visiting the Capuchin monks at Syracuse, he was seized by such an access of religious enthusiasm that he had to come away abruptly in order to conquer his desire for adopting a monastic life.

In this statement—or the way in which it is put—there may be just a touch of the *farceur*, but it illustrates aptly enough the characteristics of a man whose religion can only be defined as a kind of impulsive sentimentality.

And with this, Dumas had a genuine and undisguised contempt for the cheap scepticism of those who, posing as disciples of Voltaire, made it a fashion to sneer at the things of faith. There is a story that, in the days when he was most famous and sought after in society, he was dining one evening at a rich banker's. The conversation happened to turn upon the existence of God. A certain well known general who was present, considering no doubt that the subject was "lacking in actuality," waxed impatient, and exclaimed: "It really is surprising to me how at this time of day people can occupy themselves with such old-world fables. For my part, I cannot form the slightest conception of that mysterious being known traditionally as *le bon Dieu*."

"General," said Dumas, "I have in my house four dogs, two apes, and a parrot; and I can assure you that their opinions are absolutely and entirely identical with yours." "*Jolie riposte*," people thought; somewhat aggressive perhaps, but it was Dumas' way to be aggressive. Therefore he was constantly giving offence and creating a series of small explosions in his dealings with others. Yet—the fact is universally attested—it was impossible to be angry for long with a man who so obviously said what he felt, wittily and without malice, naturally and not artificially.

On his liberality—since that virtue is common—there is no need to enlarge: many instances of it have occurred in these pages. But we should be unjust in explaining it merely by the selfish desire of avoiding trouble: it should rather be called humanity, and referred to the radiant sympathy of a nature which redeems self-indulgence by an

even ampler indulgence for others. Once, at a time when Dumas himself was very hard pressed, a poor Italian *littérateur*—some acquaintance made in Florence or in Naples—called upon him to ask for help. "I am really," said Dumas, "no better off than you; but I have never yet sent a man in distress empty-handed from my door. Unfasten one of those pistols" (he pointed to a handsome pair which hung over the mantelpiece); "go and sell it, and leave me the other one for the next unfortunate God sends in my way to relieve." The *il faut vivre* of piteous destitution was never met in this quarter with the *je n'en vois pas la nécessité* of frigid economy.

Another good quality, though it has been less commented upon, was that rarer form of generosity which consists in ungrudging appreciation of the merits of others. Few authors, living amid so much contention and subject to so much personal effervescence, have shown an equal tolerance—nay, enthusiasm—for their fellows and rivals in literature. "If I have at times," said he, "manifested hostile sentiments, I can truly say that it has been not against the men personally, but against those whom I regarded as opposed to greatness in Art or to progress in Politics." The magniloquence does not vitiate the sincerity of this belief in Dumas' own mind. He had nothing petty or envious in his nature—no inclination to half-hearted eulogy or to admiration qualified by saving clauses. His veneration—it can hardly be called less—for Victor Hugo has been often mentioned, though the evidence of any such reciprocal feeling on the other side is not very conclusive. It is the same, in a less degree, with De Vigny, Lamartine, Gautier, Eugène Sue—with all in fact about whom he has written at any length: each comes in for his panegyric. Of course Dumas will have his joke about this

one or that, but as a rule if he cannot say good he says nothing. The nervous fragility of De Musset shrank back, it is well known, from the boisterous heartiness of his swarthy "*confrère*. Did Dumas on that account say harsh things of De Musset? On the contrary, it is only the gentlest tone of reproach that we hear: "Not being able to make him my friend, I had for him a strange feeling which I can only express by saying that *I regretted* him. Poor De Musset! I believe he was one of the most desolate souls of his time." And then comes a large laudation of the poet.

Similarly, in the case of another antipathy, a distinction is made between the author and the man: "M. de Balzac is a great genius"; and then elsewhere—to cover any hasty unfriendliness—he says: "Once for all I warn people not to pay attention to what I say about Balzac. He and I are so radically different—in temperament, in ideas, in our manner of work—that my opinions about him would be quite valueless." Contrast this with the petty spirit of the other, if at least the story be true that, in an interview on financial matters, Balzac—when the editor of the paper said to him, "I am offering you the same as I pay M. Dumas"—burst out angrily with, "Then our bargain is off; keep your money and give me back my manuscript, since you think fit to put me on a level with that mulatto."

Really, M. Honoré de Balzac, really!

Dumas erred often no doubt in his judgments of others, but his errors—in the estimation of literary merit—were on the side of generosity: his geniality dwarfed his critical sense and made him praise exuberantly where a very moderate encomium would have sufficed. This feature is especially apparent in the case of his assistants, whom, singly and collectively, he seems to have regarded as exceptionally

gifted men, whereas the majority of them had little claim to individual distinction. "*À l'oeuvre, mes enfants! travaillez! piochez!*" shouted the good-natured giant, while he beamed approval all round. Speaking of Mallefille—one of his collaborators, and not one of the most remarkable—he observed, as if pondering a problem, "There is just something he lacks—I can't define what it is—to make him a man of talent."

"Perhaps he lacks the talent," suggested some one.

"*Tiens!*" said Dumas, "well, perhaps you are right. I never thought of that."

While, therefore, his vanity was patent to every one, it must be recognized that he was not, strictly speaking, a conceited man, if that word may be presumed to imply a conviction of superiority to others, combined often with an affectation of despising popular opinion. On the contrary, though one shrinks from even appearing to covet the cheap honours of paradox—he was probably in truth one of the humblest of men. Nor—except perhaps to a few who, being anxious to make themselves heard, found that he talked too much and too well—was his vanity unamiable or offensive: it was taken as a part of the man, inseparable from his kindness and wit. "Vanity," says Monselet, "is an integral portion of his talent: he is like a balloon which, to rise, must be inflated."

But beneath the superficial vanity lay a large-heartedness not to be mistaken: the many spurious forms of greatness affected by Alexandre Dumas could not disguise the genuineness of his magnanimity. With this lofty virtue—recalling by its scale those men of ancient France whom his novels presented—may be connected, perhaps, the recurrence now and then of certain bygone elaborations of courtliness; and it will be understood why many of his most intimate

friends declared that Dumas was not a man of his own generation, but ought to have lived in the seventeenth century. Could there be, for example, a prettier way of apologizing for abruptly ending a letter to a lady than this? "There are, madame, two inexorable hours—the hour of post and the hour of death: the one presses me now, to the other believe me yours.—ALEX. DUMAS."

Ultimately, for whatever is worth saying about this man we are brought back to the materials he has himself supplied. The periodical effusions of half a century—views, appreciations, studies, reminiscences—mean little else but to ring the changes on Dumas as revealed by Dumas. So long as they do this they are bound to be amusing and informing: beyond that range they fail to carry effectively. It is a vain conceit to separate the man from the author, or to say that the one is interesting and the other is not—a theory adopted, one may suspect, because it conveniently dispenses some of the people who write about Dumas from the trouble of reading him. Hence many random shots, many curious deviations from reality. But this barren exercise of dividing the indivisible will, as time goes on, cease to be worth while. Already, in the thirty-two years since Dumas' death, a growing amalgamation of view is discernible; and it is probable that, a hundred years hence, when vividness of detail has still more faded, the final residuum of opinion about the personal Dumas—reached from himself by however much filtration—will be the idea of one who tried the hapless but exciting experiment of diversifying life by the exploits of romance. His literature, his books—or some of them—will remain, and in them he will be merged.

What sort of books? What sort of literature? Contradictory judgments run riot: the same man has been exalted to the clouds and cast down to the abyss. "The literary

Titan,"—" the father of humbug " ; " the Colossus of genius and strength,"—" the tawdry purveyor of books which he did not write," and so on in every degree that can be conceived to exist between Alexander the Great and Alexander the coppersmith.[1]

Dumas has survived the excess both of eulogy and of abuse. What is more, he has survived the purposed slight of those who ignore him when discussing French literature of the nineteenth century and the polite condescension of those who consider him as a meritorious amuser of children. The condescenders, it must be said, have no alarming altitude from which to climb down : they are mostly men who from lack of the creative faculty make much of the critical, and no one is simpler to criticize than Dumas. To such minds his fecundity, his ease, and his rapidity are an offence. The man of one laboured book cannot forgive the man of a facile hundred : he who wrestles painfully with the obstacles of thought views awry one who picked up ideas under his arm and walked off with them ever so gaily. Therefore the literary crimes of Dumas have been paraded—some of them inconsistent with others. It is said that he was neither original nor honestly un-original ; that he was careless and unscrupulous about facts and utterly deficient in style ; that he wrote too much, and was a reckless and lucky improvisor ; that he wrote nothing, and lived by the sweat of other men's brows ; that he degraded literature to the position of a dubious though profitable commerce ; that by

[1] I apologise for diverting Mr. Pollock's antithesis from its proper context. He used it, as every one will remember, to suggest the difference between Dumas *père* and Dumas *fils*—a use which, with all deference, must be described as an enormous hyperbole, justifiable only by way of balancing some equally monstrous exaggeration on the other side. The younger man may have been *le petit Alexandre*, but assuredly he was never *Alexandre le petit*.

sheer force of swagger he imposed himself upon his fellow creatures, and much else. If Dumas did all that has been said of him he must have been a more remarkable man than his warmest admirers have supposed.

But, in truth, any views of him which imply design or deliberation are false and ridiculous. He had not time to think or to weigh consequences in his literature any more than in his life: he yielded all things to temperament and the impulse of the moment: he did not calculate profit and loss, and in this respect he was less "commercial" than the majority of respectable men who make a living by the pen. He coveted money as a means to magnificence, but he would have cared for neither without the pleasure of interpreting and expanding them under the form of writing.

This may be a vulgar sort of ambition, and it is certainly far removed from the moderation and reserve of the finer artistic nature. Yet in one way Dumas will always be the absolute type of a man wholly given to literature. His own experience and that of others, whatever he saw, heard, or read of—and a vast deal that he did not—all this he instinctively converted into written and printed matter. "Tormented by the incessant need of production" is a physiological way of expressing this fact: "an imagination at the service of a temperament" is another phrase which some may approve. But give the imagination the place of honour; for assuredly, if it were necessary to say only one thing of Dumas, the one thing to say would be this—that his was a prodigious imagination which swooped on facts as its natural prey.

In the working of this native power one may observe what seems the supreme art of plausibility. That came, no doubt, from inborn dramatic faculty ripened by much experience of writing for the stage. The theatre insists on certain laws

of probability ; and the good dramatist, when he comes to be a novelist, remembers the rock from which he was hewn. Thus it is that the imagination of Dumas never degenerates into absurdity. The things that happen in his novels are stupendous, but the ways and means by which they happen are too plausible to raise a doubt : the escape of Dantes from the Château d'If comes about, if its details are considered, by the most ordinary and simple process. The same instinct or art of " lying like truth " belongs to all those writings in which we are dealing with facts capable of being checked by reference to other authorities. The account, for example, of the July Revolution—excepting perhaps for one or two trivial errors of detail such as any one might make—cannot possibly be called other than a perfectly accurate account. The things described as happening did happen : the difference is all in the illusion—the mirage—produced by the manner of narrating.

Here, then, is one indication of the essential Dumas—Dumas the dramatist. There are many other such which are obvious—notably the persistent sense of vigour and movement : the dramatic touch is apparent everywhere, and " dramatic " is one of the labels which may most fearlessly be affixed to all the work of Dumas.

Another is " popular." To use this word is to admit, for whatever they are worth, any reproaches it may involve. Dumas had no style, it is said ; and certainly, if by " style " be meant that body of mannerisms which one author affects in order to distinguish himself from others, he has nothing of the sort. But if, as one commonly takes it, no style means bad style, then the criticism is ridiculous as applied to a writer who was neither slipshod nor ambiguous, but knew what he meant and conveyed it without the possibility of misunderstanding. Dumas, it is true, wrote—as people

talk—often redundantly and with repetitions, in the manner of one who had no time to be concise, and who, being prodigal in all else, was not likely to economize in the cheap commodity of words. Against this defect—which might be fatal to the composition of a prize essay—may fairly be set the ease and lucidity of a man who, his thought and expression being simultaneous, does not trouble to refine upon the ordinary meaning of ordinary language, or by stylism court the splendid isolation of being unreadable.

That Dumas was an *improvisateur* goes without saying. In this quality he gloried as a rule, and took credit to himself for the speed at which he could turn off a play or a novel. But he is careful to point out that the improvisation is not always so great as it seems. "Paper (blue foolscap), pens, ink; a table neither too high nor too low. Sit down—reflect for half an hour—write your title—then *chapitre premier*. Arrange fifty letters to each line, thirty-five lines to each page; write two hundred pages if you want a two-volume novel, four hundred if you want a four-volume ditto, and so on. After ten, twenty, or forty days, as the case may be—assuming you write twenty pages, i.e. seven hundred lines between morning and evening—the thing is done. What could be more simple? Such is my method, say my critics: only they forget one slight detail. Before any of this apparatus is put in motion I have often thought for six months, a year, perhaps even several years, about what I am going to write. Hence the clearness of my plot, the simplicity of my methods, the naturalness of my *dénoûments*. As a rule, I do not begin a book until it is finished."

In other words, the rapidity is often one of execution, not of conception. Still Dumas had both, and was proud of having them, though he could administer an ironical flick of this sort to the superior critics. In the same passage he

says: "When you are a real novelist it is as easy to make novels as it is for an apple tree to produce apples." The simile has been remembered by more than one writer on Dumas, and has been applied to illustrate again the "force of nature"—spontaneous, luxuriant, wasteful, uneven. It embodies at least one important truth, and ought to silence one occasional error. What a pity, some have said, that a man like this frittered away his powers in so much serving of tables, that he allowed improvization to quench genius, that he did not husband his strength for some great and worthy effort!

Preposterous laments, vain surmises of what might have been! Little use it is to hold up—as with Senor Castelar[1]—pious hands of horror at so much waste, or to regret the absence of that leisure and reflection which would have produced one perfect work. The profusion of Dumas was natural and inevitable: his most laboured work was not his best: there is nothing to show—there is everything to make it improbable—that, had he written less, he would have written better. Again we revert to Nature, and we remember how—to borrow from Paley—the order of Nature, though beneficent on the whole, is not optimistic. There are many things in it which we might conceive as much better arranged than they are: the same conception is very obvious in the case of Dumas. After all, these abundant fruits of incessant energy have to be considered: quantity counts for something, especially when the quality is not bad. Dumas, it is said, never wrote a dull line himself, because to do that would have made him yawn. And so, if passages in his books ever strike the reader that way, the inference is that they must be put down either as copied from some other

[1] Essay on *Life of Lord Byron and other Sketches*. By Emilio Castelar.

author or written in by one of the "hands." In the multitude and variety of his works, those which the world has agreed to recognize most, are several of his novels and a few of his plays; but it is not to be forgotten that the same man had something to say—and always with good sense—on every contemporary subject of literature, drama, and art. Neither is it to be forgotten that, roaming—or romping—through a larger field, he took up solid blocks of history and plumped them down in their places, adding thereto on his own account much eloquence and no small amount of philosophy; and all this without turning a hair, without a sigh or a struggle, only with an immense relish and an infinite satisfaction. Such wholesale resources of the universal provider cannot but move some awe and admiration among all the small dealers in the different departments of knowledge.

The limitations of Dumas are not in dispute. So great width cannot be with depth: he himself was cheerfully conscious of that. *Tout en dehors* and *vulgarisateur* were his own admissions of it. And perhaps, amid all else that has been said, the one true and serious reproach against his work is that it seldom indicates thought in the writer and hardly ever provokes thought in the reader. We are amused, we are interested: "he makes us," as some one said, "turn over the page, but he never makes us meditate."

That may be one of the attributes of popular work; and there is another. It was not in the character of Dumas' genius to start new subjects or unexplored lines of thought. What he did was to absorb such as were in the air around him, and to put them—either by raising or by lowering—on the exact level of popular appreciation. He did this in his dramas; he did it notably in his historical novels; and he did it always in a way of his own, by feeling rather than

by understanding. His originality, therefore,—if ever so unsatisfactory a word is brought into question—must be taken in this sense.

His influence has probably been the greatest in the sphere of drama, which was by nature especially his. If such an authority as M. Sardou has considered him the best all-round *homme de théâtre* of his century, we may fairly conclude that—however much for mechanism the French stage has been indebted to Scribe, for observation and analysis to the tradition of Balzac's method—in the whole range of emotional and sensational effects, which are the ultimate necessity of the theatre, no influence has equalled that of the elder Dumas.

In fiction it is more difficult to be positive. The furious vogue of the historical novel began and ended—so far as France is concerned—with the author of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and the rest. He exhausted that soil and left it when it ceased to be productive. There is no reason, however, why after a period of lying fallow, it should not again yield good crops—as the success of one or two younger French writers of the present day seems to show.

In the purely popular department of the exciting *feuilleton*, it is easy to see that just as Dumas represents the climax of Frédéric Soulié and Eugène Sue, so down from him on the other side came Ponson du Terrail, Xavier de Montépin, and others whose names are less familiar here. Much of his writing is, no doubt, of a class which comes within the capacity of the ordinary industrious *littérateur*. But let no one lightly suppose that any of these men have reached the measure of the fulness of Dumas. When a great ship breaks and goes to pieces on the rocks, it is open for all—the loiterers on the shore, nay even the children—to pick up the fragments and spars that float in; from these each one

may fashion his miniature yacht or brig and send it afloat, adorned with pretty sails and flags, to brave the dangers of the nearest duck-pond. But the difference of dimension —what but the most hopeless optical delusion can fail to recognize that ?

Thus at last, though tentatively and often by negation, an end has been reached : if light has not been added, at least some darkness may have been dissipated. To go further in a study of the man whose career has been outlined in these pages would only be to encroach on those private opinions which all may form for themselves, and which the majority have long since formed. That he was a great man in any proper sense of the term it would be silly to maintain : except for increasing the already ample means of relaxation he did nothing to benefit humanity at large, and to individuals his personal example can hardly have been other than harmful. But if the word " genius "—as the possession and use of natural gifts—has still any meaning left, then truly Alexandre Dumas was a great genius.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

APPENDIX I includes :—

A. Drama.
B. Fiction.
C. Historical Works.
D. Books of Travel.
E. Miscellaneous Works, including Poetry.
F. Historical Novels in sequence of time.

The references in this classification are always to the standard 12° Lévy edition (one franc per volume) of Dumas' works, except where otherwise stated.

Besides that edition the same publishers issue :—

(1) An *édition populaire* (4°) of about a hundred works, at prices ranging from fifty centimes to five francs.

(2) An *édition des oeuvres* (4°) with illustrations, at four francs per volume, which includes all the chief novels.

(3) An *édition de luxe* at various prices, of the following books : *Le Capitaine Pamphile* (illustrated by Bertall), *La Dame de Monsoreau* (250 illustrations by Maurice Leloir), *Herminie* (illustrated), *Histoire de mes Bêtes* (illustrated by Adrien Marie), *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (illustrated by Maurice Leloir), *La Tulipe Noire* (illustrated by Charles Morel), *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* (illustrated by A. de Neuville).

APPENDIX II. List of French authorities on Alexandre Dumas.

APPENDIX I

A. DRAMA. Arranged in order of representation. The number in brackets after the title indicates the volume in the Théâtre Complet (Lévy, 25 vols.) in which the play will be found.

Title.	Description.	Theatre and Date of Production.	Notes.
La Chasse et l'Amour (1)	vaudeville	Ambigu Comique Sept. 22, 1825	in collaboration with De Leuven and Rousseau
La Noce et l'Enterrement (1)	vaudeville	Porte Saint Martin Nov. 21, 1826	in collaboration with Lassagne
Henri III et sa Cour (1)	drama	Théâtre Français Feb. 10, 1829	This drama produced three parodies: *La Cour du Roi Pétaud* (Vaudeville); *Le Brutal* (Gaîte); *Cricri et ses mitrons* (Variétés)
Christine (1)	drama in verse	Odéon Mar. 30, 1830	Described in the first published edition as *Stockholm, Fontainebleau et Rome*, trilogie sur la vie de Christine; dedicated to the Duc d'Orléans. Was parodied as *Tristine ou Chaillot, Surène et Charenton* (Ambigu Comique).
Napoléon Bonaparte (2)	drama	Odéon Jan. 11, 1831	Sub-title, Trente ans de l'histoire de France: with this epigraph: "D'ici, à cinquante ans, toute l'Europe sera républicaine ou cosaque." (Napoleon's words as reported in the *Mémorial de Sainte Hélène*), and this dedication: "À la nation Française."

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Title.	Description.	Theatre and Date of Production.	Notes.
Antony (2) . .	drama	Porte Saint Martin May 3, 1831	A parody of this was called *Bâtardi, ou le désagrément de n'avoir ni père ni mère* at the Variétés.
Charles VII. chez ses grands vassaux (2)	tragedy in verse	Odéon Oct. 22, 1831	
Richard Darlington (3)	drama	Porte Saint Martin Dec 10, 1831	in collaboration with Beudin and Goubaux
Teresa (3) . .	drama	Ventadour Feb. 6, 1832	in collaboration with Anicet Bourgeois
Le Mari de la Veuve (3)	comedy	Théâtre Français Apr. 4, 1832	in collaboration with Anicet Bourgeois and Durieu
La Tour de Nesle (4)	drama	Porte Saint Martin May 29, 1832	in collaboration with Frédéric Gaillardet
Le Fils de l'Émigré	drama	Porte Saint Martin Aug. 28, 1832	not printed; in collaboration with Anicet Bourgeois
Angèle (4) . .	drama	Porte Saint Martin Dec. 28, 1833	in collaboration with Anicet Bourgeois. This play provoked two pamphlets. (1) *Angèle* drame de M. Alexandre Dumas vengé des critiques et de ses détracteurs. (2) *Angèle*, drame en 5 actes narré et commenté par Madame Giboù à ses commères
Catherine Howard (4)	drama	Porte Saint Martin June 2, 1834	described by Dumas "an extra-historic drama." This play produced a pamphlet called "Catherine Howard d'après Voltaire et d'autres historiens"
Don Juan de Marana (5)	drama fantastique	Porte Saint Martin Apr. 30, 1836	described also "la chute d'un ange, mystère en cinq actes et neuf tableaux, en prose et en vers, musique de M. Piccini." It was parodied under the same title

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Title.	Description.	Theatre and Date of Production.	Notes.
Kean (5) . .	drama	Variétés Aug. 31, 1836	in collaboration with Théaulon and De Courcy; sub-title, *Désordre et génie*. Parodied as "*Kinne*, ou que de génie en désordre!"
Piquillo (5) .	opéra comique	Opéra Comique Oct. 31, 1837	in collaboration with Gérard de Nerval; music by Hippolyte Monpon.
Caligula (6) .	tragedy	Théâtre Français Dec. 26, 1837	in collaboration with Anicet Bourgeois; dedicated to an un-named person (probably the Duc d'Orléans). A medal was struck to commemorate the production
Paul Jones (6)	drama	Panthéon Oct. 8, 1838	constructed from Dumas' novel *Le Capitaine Paul*
Mademoiselle de Belleisle (7) .	comedy	Théâtre Français Apr. 2, 1839	in collaboration (according to Quérard) with Count Walewski; based, at any rate, on an unaccepted piece by Brunswick. The play in its published form was described as a *drama*
L'Alchimiste (6) . .	drama in verse	Renaissance Apr. 10, 1839	in collaboration (according to Quérard) with Gérard de Labrunie; based on Milman's *Fazio*; the MS. had a verse dedication to Mlle. Ida Ferrier
Un Mariage sous Louis XV (7)	comedy	Théâtre Français June 1, 1841	possibly in collaboration with De Leuven and Brunswick; is dedicated "to the town of Florence, in memory of its kind hospitality"
Lorenzino (7) .	drama	Théâtre Français Feb. 24, 1842	possibly in collaboration with De Leuven and Brunswick; based on Alfred de Musset's *Spectacle dans un fauteuil*; was only performed seven times

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Title.	Description.	Theatre and Date of Production.	Notes.
Halifax (8) . .	comedy	Variétés Dec. 2, 1842	in collaboration (according to Quérard) with A. d'Ennery. On the first night the author's name was announced as "M. Davy"
Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr (8)	comedy	Théâtre Français July 25, 1843	possibly in collaboration with De Leuven and Brunswick; dedicated to "my good friend, Madame la Comtesse Dash"
Louise Bernard (8)	drama	Porte Saint Martin Nov. 18, 1843	in collaboration with the same
Le Laird de Dumbiky (9)	comedy	Odéon Dec. 30, 1843	
Les Mousquetaires (14)	drama	Ambigu Comique Oct 27, 1845	in collaboration with Maquet. This is a dramatization of Vingt ans après
Une Fille du Régent (9)	comedy	Théâtre Français April 1, 1846	in collaboration possibly with De Leuven and Brunswick; dramatized from the novel of the same name; was only performed fourteen times
La Reine Margot (10)	drama	Théâtre Historique Feb. 20, 1847	in collaboration with Maquet; a dramatization of the novel; was the opening piece of the Théâtre Historique. Parodies were "*Catherine* 3/6" (*sic*) and "*Fouyou* au Théâtre Historique, pot-pourri en 14 tableaux"
Intrigue et Amour (10)	drama	Théâtre Historique June 11, 1847	translated from Schiller
Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge (11)	drama	Théâtre Historique Aug. 3, 1847	in collaboration with Maquet; dramatized from the novel of the same name
Hamlet (11) .	drama in verse	Théâtre Historique Dec. 15, 1847	in collaboration with Paul Meurice; translated from Shakespeare

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Title.	Description.	Theatre and Date of Production.	Notes.
Monte Cristo (12)	drama	Théâtre Historique Feb. 3 and 4, 1848	in collaboration with Maquet ; dramatized from the novel ; divided, because of its length, into two parts, produced on successive evenings
Catilina (15) .	drama	Théâtre Historique Oct. 14, 1848	in collaboration with Maquet
La Jeunesse des Mousquetaires (14)	drama	Théâtre Historique Feb. 17, 1849	in collaboration with Maquet ; is a dramatization of the novel *Les Trois Mousquetaires*
Le Chevalier d'Harmental (15)	drama	Théâtre Historique July 26, 1849	in collaboration with Maquet ; dramatized from the novel of the same name
La Guerre des Femmes (16)	drama	Théâtre Historique Oct. 1, 1849	in collaboration with Maquet
Le Comte Hermann (16)	drama	Théâtre Historique Nov. 22 1849	based on an unsuccessful play by another author called *La Jeune Vieillesse*
Le Cachemire Vert (11)	comedy	Gymnase Dec. 15, 1849	in collaboration with Eugène Nus
Trois entr'actes pour *l'Amour Médecin* (16)	comedy	Théâtre Français Jan. 15, 1850	to celebrate the anniversary of Molière's birth ; performed three times only
Le Vingt-quatre Février (17)	drama	Gaîté Mar. 30, 1850	sub-title, *L'Auberge de Schawasbach* ; based on the German of Werner
Urbain Grandier (17)	drama	Théâtre Historique Mar. 30, 1850	in collaboration with Maquet
La Chasse au Chastre (17)	comedy	Théâtre Historique Aug. 3, 1850	in collaboration with Méry
Le Comte de Morcerf (13)	drama	Ambigu Comique Apr. 1, 1851	in collaboration with Maquet ; forms the third part of *Monte Cristo*

APPENDIX I

Title.	Description.	Theatre and Date of Production.	Notes.
La Barrière de Clichy (18)	military drama	Cirque Apr. 21, 1851	
Villefort (13) .	drama	Ambigu Comique May 8, 1851	in collaboration with Maquet; forms the fourth part of *Monte Cristo*
Le Vampire (18)	drama fantastique	Ambigu Comique Dec. 30, 1851	in collaboration with Maquet
Romulus (19) .	comedy (in one act)	Théâtre Français Jan. 13, 1854	based on a novel by Auguste Lafontaine
La Jeunesse de Louis XIV (19)	comedy	Brussels (Vaudeville Theatre) Jan. 20, 1854	This play had been accepted at the Français, but was not played there. It was, after Dumas' death, performed in Paris at the Odéon. Dedicated to Noel Parfait as a "*souvenir d'exil*"
Le Marbrier (19)	drama	Vaudeville May 22, 1854	
La Conscience (20)	drama	Odéon Nov. 7, 1854	dedicated to Victor Hugo: "Receive it as the testimony of a friendship which has survived exile and will, I trust, survive even death. I believe in the immortality of the soul." This drama is based on a German trilogy by Iffland
L'Orestie (20) .	tragedy	Porte Saint Martin Jan. 5, 1856	imitated from the Greek; dedicated "To the people," and, at the end, these words: "Thanks to the artists who, after making this a success for me, insisted on my coming forward to receive the applause which was due to them"
La Tour Saint-Jacques (20)	drama	Cirque Nov. 15, 1856	in collaboration with Xavier de Montépin; parodied under the same title

Title.	Description.	Theatre and Date of Production.	Notes.
Le Verrou de la Reine (21)	comedy	Gymnase Dec. 15, 1856	
L'Invitation à la Valse (21)	comedy	Gymnase June 18, 1857	
Les Gardes Forestiers (21)	drama	At Marseilles (Grand Théâtre Mar. 23, 1858	dramatized from the novel *Catherine Blum*
L'Honneur est satisfait (22)	comedy	Gymnase June 19, 1858	translation from the German
Le Roman d'Elvire (22)	opéra comique	Opéra Comique Feb. 4, 1860	in collaboration with De Leuven; music by Ambroise Thomas
L'Envers d'une Conspiration (22)	comedy	Vaudeville June 4, 1860	
Le Gentilhomme de la Montagne (23)	drama	Porte Saint Martin June 12, 1860	a dramatization of Dumas' novel *El Salteador*
La Dame de Monsoreau (23)	drama	Ambigu Comique Nov. 19, 1860	in collaboration with Maquet; dramatized from the novel of the same name
Le Prisonnier de la Bastille	drama	?	a dramatization of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*; not included in the Lévy collection
Les Mohicans de Paris (24)	drama	Gaîté Aug. 20, 1864	dramatized from the novel of the same name
Gabriel Lambert (24)	drama	Ambigu Comique Mar. 16, 1866	in collaboration with Amédée de Jallais; based on the novel of the same name
Madame de Chamblay (25)	drama	Ventadour June 4, 1868	based on the novel of the same name
Les Blancs et les Bleus (25)	drama	Châtelet	from the novel

Note.—In addition to these, Dumas collaborated at various times in several plays which were performed under the names of other authors.

APPENDIX I

B. Fiction (Novels and Stories). Alphabetically arranged.

[*Note.*—The number of volumes and of pages in this and sections C, D, E, refers to the standard 12° Lévy edition (one franc per volume); they are added for the sake of giving the reader a rough idea of the size of the work, though of course the type varies considerably. The date of original publication refers always to the first appearance of the work in book form.]

Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of Original Publication.	Notes.
Acté	1	266	1839 (Dumont) 2 vols.	Dedicated "To the memory of my mother, who died while I was finishing this work"
Amaury . .	1	283	1844 (Souverain) 4 vols.	in collaboration with Paul Meurice; appeared first in *La Presse*
Ange Pitou . .	2	674	1853 (Cadot) 8 vols.	in collaboration with Auguste Maquet; forms third part of series Mémoires d'un Médecin
Ascanio . .	2	641	1844 (Pétion) 5 vols.	in collaboration with Paul Meurice; appeared first in *Le Siècle*. Was dramatized—not by Dumas—as *Benvenuto Cellini*, and produced April 1, 1852, at the Porte Saint Martin
Aventure d'Amour *including* Herminie	1	274	?	
Aventures de John Davys	2	636	1840 (Dumont) 4 vols.	taken mainly from a story in *La Revue Britannique*
Le Bâtard de Mauléon	3	805	1846 (Cadot) 9 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet; appeared first in *Le Commerce*
Black	1	316	1858 (Cadot) 4 vols.	

Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Note.
Les Blancs et Les Bleus		881	1868 (Michel Levy) 3 vols.	dedicated to the memory of Charles Nodier, by whose *Souvenirs de la Révolution* it was suggested; companion to *Les Compagnons de Jéhu*
La Bouillie de la Comtesse Berthe	1	238	1845 (Hetzel) 1 vol.	with illustrations by Bertall
including Aventures de Lyderic			1842 (Dumont) 1 vol.	This story in the Brussels edition (1858) forms part of vol iii. of *L'Horoscope*
La Boule de Neige, *including* Le Chasse-Neige	1	290	1862 (Lévy) 1 vol.	Translation from the Russian of Pouchkine
Un cadet de famille, *including* Un courtisan	3	856	?	
Le Capitaine Pamphile, *including* Le Fléau de Naples	1	295	1840 (Dumont) 2 vols.	
Le Capitaine Paul	1	233	1838 (Dumont) 2 vols.	in collaboration with Dauzats; based on Cooper's *The Pilot*. The drama of *Paul Jones* was made from this
Le Capitaine Rhino, *including* Le Lion père de famille, and Une chasse au tigre	1	220	?	
Le Capitaine Richard	1	306	1858 (Cadot) 3 vols.	
Catherine Blum	1	269	1854 (Cadot) 2 vols.	afterwards dramatized as *Les Gardes Forestiers*
Cécile	1	281	1844 (Dumont) 2 vols.	published also in Belgium as *La Robe de Noces*

APPENDIX I

Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Note.
Le Chasseur de Sauvagine	1	285	1859 (Cadot) 2 vols.	
Le Château d'Eppstein	2	504	1844 (De Potter) 3 vols.	
Le Chevalier d'Harmental	2	615	1843 (Dumont) 4 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet
Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge	2	606	1846 (Cadot) 6 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet. The sixth vol. was chiefly occupied by the story *La Chasse au Chastre*. An illustrated edition was published (Marescq et Cie.) in 1853
Le Collier de la Reine	3	868	1850 (Cadot) 9 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet
La Colombe, *including* Maître Adam le Calabrais	1	303	? 1840 (Dumont) 1 vol.	edition with vignettes in 1857 (Dufour et Mulat)
Les Compagnons de Jéhu	3	820	1857 (Cadot) 7 vols.	appeared first in the *Journal pour tous*; companion book to *Les Blancs et les Bleus*
Le Comte de Monte Cristo	6	2118	1845 (Pétion) 12 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet and possibly Fiorentino. The first illustrated edition, with illustrations by Gavarni and Tony Johannot appeared in 1846
La Comtesse de Charny	6	1888	1853–1855 (Cadot) 19 vols.	First illustrated edition (Dufour et Mulat) 2 vols. appeared 1858; fourth part of series *Mémoires d'un Médecin*
Les Confessions de la Marquise	2	529	1857 (Cadot) 8 vols.	originally published as *Madame du Deffand*

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Title.	Lévy Edition		Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Note.
	Vols.	Pages.		
Conscience l'Innocent, *including* Le Bien et le Mal, and Marianna	2	532	1853 (Cadot) 5 vols.	The title refers to the Belgian novelist Conscience
La Dame de Monsoreau	3	898	1846 (Pétion) 8 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet. First illustrated edition (illustrations by Beaucé) published in 1857 by Marescq et Cie.
La Dame de Volupté	2	616	1863 (Lévy) 2 vols.	sub-title *Mémoires de Mlle. de Luynes*
Les Deux Diane	3	853	1846–1847 (Cadot) 10 vols.	according to Parran, this was written wholly by Paul Meurice, and Dumas was alleged to have confessed that he had not seen it
Les Deux Reines	2	666	1864 (Lévy) 2 vols.	sequel to *La Dame de Volupté*
Dieu dispose . .	2	736	1852 (Cadot) 6 vols.	forms sequel to *Le Trou de l'Enfer*
Le Docteur Mystérieux	2	630	?	forms first part of *La Fille du Marquis*
Les Drames Galants	2	572	1860 (Lévy) 2 vols.	also a Brussels edition undated, 5 vols (Méline Cans et Cie.)
Emma Lyonna .	5	1556	?	companion to *La San Félice* and *Souvenirs d'une favorite*
La Femme au collier de velours	1	234	1851 (Cadot) 2 vols.	in collaboration with Paul Lacroix (according to Octave Uzanne)
Fernande . . .	1	312	1844 (Dumont) 3 vols.	in collaboration with Hippolyte Auger; first appeared in *La Revue de Paris*

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Title.	Levy Edition. Vols.	Levy Edition. Pages.	Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Note.
La Fille du Marquis	2	555	?	forms sequel to *Le Docteur Mystérieux*
Une Fille du Régent	1	353	1845 (Cadot) 4 vols.	attributed to Couailhac by Quérard; first appeared in *Le Commerce*. Edition with illustrations by Beaucé published in 1857 (Marescq)
Le Fils du Forçat (contains *M. Coumbes* and *Histoire d'un cabanon et d'un châlet*)	1	314	1852–1854	part of this was first published in Brussels
Les Frères Corses, *including* Othon l'Archer	1	293	1845 (Souverain) 2 vols.	vol. ii. was dedicated to Prosper Mérimée, and ended with a recollection of an early experience together called *Mes infortunes de Garde national*. An illustrated edition was published in 1853 (Marescq). *Othon l'Archer* appeared first in 1840
Gabriel Lambert, *including* La Pêche aux filets, Invraisemblance, and Une âme à naître	1	275	1844 (Souverain) 2 vols.	formed part of a collection called *Bibliothèque des Romans nouveaux*
Georges . . .	1	309	1843 (Dumont) 3 vols.	attributed by Mirecourt to Mallefille
La Guerre des Femmes	2	636	1845–1846 (Potter) 8 vols.	in collaboration possibly with Maquet. Originally appeared in four parts (each two vols.) viz.: *Nanon de Lartigues*; *Madame de Condé*; *La Vicomtesse de Cambes*; *L'Abbaye de Peyssac*
Histoire d'un Casse-noisette, *including* L'Égoïste and Nicolas le philosophe	1	279	1845 (Hetzel) 2 vols.	first edition illustrated by Bertall

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Note.
L'Horoscope . .	1	283	1858 (Hetzel) 3 vols.	originally published at Brussels
L'Île de Feu . .	2	589	?	
Ingénue . . .	2	649	1854 (Cadot) 7 vols.	begun in *Le Siécle*; its publication was stopped by an action brought by the descendants of Restif de la Bretonne
Isaac Laquedem .	2	657	1853 (Marchant) 2 vols.	intended to run into thirty volumes; was stopped by the censorship
Ivanhoe . . .	2	592	?	a translation of Scott's novel
Jacques Ortis, *including* Les Fous de docteur Miraglia	1	291	1839 (Dumont) 1 vol.	has a preface by Fiorentino stating that the book is simply a translation of Ugo Foscolo's book
Jacquot sans oreilles, *including* Les deux Étudiants	1	227	?	originally published at Brussels
Jane, *including* Un coup de feu, Le Faiseur de Cercueils, Don Bernardo de Zuniga	1	320	1863 (Lévy) 1 vol.	
Joseph Balsamo .	5	1519	1846-1848 (Cadot) 10 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet; first appeared in *La Presse*; forms first part of series *Mémoires d'un Médecin*. First illustrated edition 1863 (Dufour et Mulat)
Les Louves de Machecoul	3	958	1859 (Cadot) 10 vols.	appeared first in the *Journal pour tous*. An edition with fifteen illustrations was published in 1860 (Dufour et Mulat)

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Note.
Madame de Chamblay	2	537	1863 (Lévy) 2 vols.	
La Maison de Glace	2	602	1860 (Lévy) 2 vols.	
Le Maître d'Armes	1	313	1840 (Dumont) 3 vols.	a story dealing with a Russian conspiracy of 1825, but receiving its title from being based on the account given to Dumas by Grisier, the *maître d'armes*
Les Mariages du père Olifus	1	264	1850 (Cadot) 5 vols.	in collaboration with Paul Bocage, and possibly Paul Lacroix
Mémoires d'une Aveugle	2	604	1857 (Cadot) 8 vols.	originally called *Madame du Deffand*
Le Meneur de Loups	1	211	1857 (Cadot) 3 vols.	
Les Mille et un Fantômes	1	237	1849 (Cadot) 2 vols.	in collaboration with Paul Bocage; an illustrated edition appeared in 1853 (Marescq)
Les Mohicans de Paris	4	1203	1854–1855 (Cadot) 19 vols.	in collaboration with Paul Bocage; edition with fifty-two illustrations was published in 1859 (Dufour et Mulat)
Une Nuit à Florence	1	250	?	
Olympe de Clèves	3	821	1852 (Cadot) 9 vols.	probably in collaboration with Paul Lacroix
Le Page du Duc de Savoie	2	607	1855 (Cadot) 8 vols.	edition with thirteen illustrations published in 1863 (Dufour et Mulat)
Parisiens et Provinciaux	2	562	?	in collaboration with the Marquis de Cherville

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Note.
Le Pasteur d'Ashbourn	2	624	1853 (Cadot) 8 vols.	
Pauline, *including* Murat and Pascal Bruno	1	306	?	
Le Père la ruine .	1	317	1860 (Lévy) 2 vols.	
Le Prince des Voleurs	1	575	?	
La Princesse de Monaco	2	642	1854 (Cadot) 6 vols.	
La Princesse Flora	1	253	1863 (Lévy) 1 vol.	
Les-Quarante-Cinq	3	898	1848 (Cadot) 10 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet; an edition with illustrations by Beaucé and Coppin was published in 1861 (Lécrivain et Toubon)
La Reine Margot	2	619	1845 (Garnier) 6 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet; appeared first in *La Presse*; an edition illustrated by Lampsonius and Lancelot was published in 1853 (Marescq)
Robin Hood . .	2	535	?	forms a sequel to *Le Prince des voleurs*
Le Salteador . .	1	319	?	
Salvator, *including* Monseigneur Gaston Phoebus	5	1427	1855–1859 (Cadot) 14 vols.	in collaboration with Paul Bocage; forms sequel to *Les Mohicans de Paris*
La San Félice . .	4	1310	1864–1865 (Lévy) 9 vols.	

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date, etc., of Original Publication.	Notes.
Souvenirs d'Antony	1	318	1835 (Dumont) 1 vol.	a collection of seven stories, some of them having already appeared separately; *Cherubino et Celestini*; *le Cocher de Cabriolet*; *Blanche de Beaulieu; Un bal masqué*; *Bernard, histoire pour les chasseurs*; *Dom Martyns de Freytas*; *Jacques I. et Jacques II.*
Souvenirs d'une Favorite	4	1258	1865 (Lévy) 2 vols.	
Sultanetta . .	1	320	1862 (Lévy) 1 vol.	
Sylvandire . .	1	315	1844 (Dumont) 3 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet, to whom the book is dedicated
La Terreur Prussienne	2	588	1867 (Lévy) 2 vols.	
Le Testament de M. de Chauvelin	1	273	?	
Les Trois Mousquetaires	2	688	1844 (Baundry) 8 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet; first illustrated edition was published in 1846, with thirty-three illustrations (Fellens et Dufour)
Le Trou de l'Enfer	1	304	1851 (Cadot) 4 vols.	an edition with illustrations in 1861 (Lécrivain et Toubon)
La Tulipe Noire .	1	307	1850 (Baundry) 3 vols.	
Le Vicomte de Bragelonne	6	2009	1848–1850 (Lévy) 26 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet; first illustrated edition in 1851 (Mulat)
Vingt ans après	3	883	1845 (Baudry) 10 vols.	in collaboration with Maquet; first illustrated edition in 1846 (Fellens et Dufour)

Note.—To these may be added (not contained in the Lévy collection), the following novels which were published in Dumas' name: *Albine* (1843), a translation from the German; *Une Amazone* (1845); *Ammalat Beg* (1859); *La Fregate l'Esperance* (1853); *Marie Giovanni* (1852 ?); *Moullah Nour* (1853).

APPENDIX I

C. HISTORICAL WORKS (*Scènes et études historiques*). Arranged in chronological order.

[The date in square brackets after the title indicates the period to which the work belongs, or which it covers.]

Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
César [50 B.C.] . .	2	620	1856–1858	belongs to the series *Les Grands Hommes en robe de chambre*
Gaule et France [65 B.C.]	1	294	1833	
Les Hommes de Fer [740–1425]	1	202	1867	contains Pépin; Charlemagne; Guelfes et Gibelins; Le Sire de Giac
Les Médicis [1291–1737]	1	269	1845	
Italiens et Flammands [1324–1672]	2	574	1862	vol. i contains: Masaccio de San Giovanni; Jean Bellin; Le Pérugin; Léonard de Vinci; Pinturiccio; Fra Bartholoméo; Albert Durer; Luca de Cranach. Vol. ii contains: Quintin Metzys; André de Mantegna; Baldasarre Peruzzi; Giorgione; Jean Antoine Razzi; Baccio Bandinelli; André del Sarto; Guérard Berck-Heyden; Jules Romain; Jacques de Pontormo; Jean Antoine Sogliani; Frère Philippe Lippi; François Mierris; Alexandre Botticelli; Ange Gaddi; Jean Holbein
La Comtesse de Salisbury [1338]	2	567	1840	the first of a series called *Chroniques de France*
Isabel de Bavière [1389]	2	584	1836	series *Chroniques de France*
Jehanne la Pucelle [1429]	1	285	1842	series *Chroniques de France*. (This volume includes Praxède and Pierre le Cruel)
Charles le Téméraire [1433]	2	635	1859	
Les Stuarts [1437–1587]	1	307	1840	series *Chroniques de France*
Trois Maîtres [1474–1576]	1	262	1862	contains Michel Ange; Titien; Raphael

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
Henri IV, Louis XIII et Richelieu [1553–1585]	2	620	1858	series *Les Grands Hommes en robe de chambre*
Les Drames de la Mer [1619–1825]	1	297	1852	contains Boutikoé; Le Capitaine Marion; La Junon; Le Kent
Louis XIV et son siècle [1638–1715]	4	1190	1845	
Louis XV et sa Cour [1710–1774]	2	589	1849	
La Régence [1715–1723]	1	301	1849	
Louis XVI et la Révolution [1754–1789]	2	648	1851	
Napoléon [1769–1821]	1	309	1839	a reprint of four articles which appeared in *Le Plutarque Français* (viz.: Le général Bonaparte; Bonaparte premier consul; Napoléon empereur; Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène)
La Route de Varennes [1791]	1	279	1860	
Le Drame de 93 [1793]	3	870	?	
Mémoires de Garibaldi [1807]	2	574	1860	translated by Dumas from the original MS. of Garibaldi. The Brussels edition of 1861 is preceded by a speech of Victor Hugo and an introduction by George Sand
Les Garibaldiens [1860]	1	315	1861	

To the above may be added (not included in the Lévy collection) the following historical works: (1) *Mémoires d'Horace* (1860), derived from a MS. in the Vatican Library, and published *en feuilleton* in the *Siècle*; (2) *Histoire des Bourbons de Naples*, written by Dumas during his stay in Naples (1860–1864); (3) *Histoire de Louis Philippe*; (4) *Histoire de dixhuit ans* 1830–1848.

Note.—In this section the following may be bracketed as forming series :—

(1) César, Henri IV, Louis XIII, Richelieu } Les Grands Hommes en robe de Chambre.

(2) La Comtesse de Salisbury, Isabelle de Bavière, Jehanne La Pucelle, Les Stuarts } Chroniques de France

(3) Les Médicis, Trois Maîtres, Italiens et Flamands } Italian history.

(4) Louis XIV et son siècle, La Régence, Louis XV et sa Cour, Louis XVI et la Révolution, La Route de Varennes, Le Drame de 93 } French history.

D. Books of Travel. (*Impressions de voyage*).

(1) Those which form series.
(2) Isolated books.

(1)

Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
Le Midi de la France	2	613	1841	originally published as *Nouvelles Impressions de voyage* (Midi de la France). The third volume contained the story *La Chasse au Chastre*, which was first published in Brussels, and has not been printed separately in France
Une Année à Florence	1	278	1841	
La Villa Palmieri	1	278	1843	
Le Speronare	2	616	1842	this series deals with Sicily and the south of Italy
Le Capitaine Aréna	1	296	1842	
Le Corricolo	2	625	1843	
De Paris à Cadix	2	611	1848	deals with Dumas' tour in Spain (1846), and in Algiers
Le Véloce	2	597	1851	

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
Impressions de voyage en Russie	4	1224	1860	the first of these was originally called *De Paris à Astrakan*
Le Caucase . .	3	890	1859	they both describe Dumas' Russian tour in 1858
(2) L'Arabie Heureuse	3	935	1843	
Les Baleiniers	2	618	1858	deals with Australia
Excursions sur les bords du Rhin	2	564	1841	
Un Gil Blas en Californie	1	323	1852	
Un Pays Inconnu	1	320	1865	deals with Havana and Brazil
Quinze Jours au Sinai	1	290	1839	an account of Baron Taylor's expedition to Sinai
Suisse	3	890	1833	describing Dumas' Swiss tour in 1832
La Vie au désert .	2	556	?	deals with Southern Africa

E. Miscellaneous Works (critical, biographical and various). Alphabetically arranged.

Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
Un Alchimiste au dix - neuvième siècle			1843 (Dumont)	This is not included in the Lévy catalogue. It is a biography of Henri de Ruolz, musician and chemist
L'Art et les Artistes contemporains au Salon de 1859	1		1859	published at two francs, but not included in the general Lévy catalogue

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
Bric-à-Brac .	1	297	1861	contains the following sketches: Deux Infanticides; Poètes, Peintres et Musiciens; Désir et possession; Une Mère; Le Curé de Boulogne; Un fait personnel; Le drame des *Forestiers*; Heures de Prison; Jacques Fosse; Le Château de Pierrefonds; Le Lotus Blanc et la Rose mousseuse
Causeries . .	2	558	1860	*Vol. i.* contains: Les Trois Dames; Les Rois du Lundi; Une chasse aux éléphants; L'homme d'expérience; Les Étoiles commis-voyageurs; un plan d'économie; La Figurine de César; Une Fabrique des Vases étrusques à Bourg-en-Bresse; État civil du *Comte de Monte Cristo* *Vol. ii.* contains: Ah! qu'on est fier d'être Français!; À ceux qui veulent entrer au théâtre; Petits cadeaux de mon ami Delaporte; Un voyage dans la lune; Ce qu'on voit chez Madame Tussaud; Le Lion de l'Aurès; Les Courses d'Epsom; Une visite à Garibaldi
Filles, Lorettes et Courtisanes, *including* Les Serpents	1	279	1843	
Histoire de mes Bêtes	1	329	1868	appeared first *en feuilleton* in *Les Nouvelles*
L'Homme aux Contes	1	302	1853	contains: Le Soldat de Plomb; Petit Jean et Gros Jean; Le Roi des Taupes et sa fille; La Reine des neiges; Les Deux Frères; Le vaillant petit tailleur; Les mains géantes; La Chèvre, le Tailleur es ses trois fils; Saint Nepomucène et le Savetier. (These may be described as stories for children)

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Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
Mes Mémoires .	10	3191	1852–1854	originally published in twenty-two vols. (Cadot); they do not go further in the author's life than 1832
Les Morts vont vite	2	514	1861	*Vol i.* contains: Chateaubriand; Le Duc et la Duchesse d'Orléans; Hégésippe Moreau; Béranger. *Vol. ii.* contains: Eugène Sue; Alfred de Musset; Achille Dévéria; La dernière année de Marie Dorval
Le Père Gigogne .	2	626	1860	Stories for children; *vol. i.* contains: Le Lièvre de mon grandpère; La petite Sirène; Le Roi des Quilles. *Vol. ii.* contains: La jeunesse de Pierrot; Pierre et son oie; Blanche de Neige; Le Sifflet enchanté; L'Homme sans larmes; Tiny la vaniteuse
Propos d'Art et de Cuisine	1	304	?	contains: La Rétraite illuminée; Causerie culinaire; *Romulus* et *Pizarre*; Le Cimetière Clamart; Sculpture et Sculpteurs; Les Gorilles; *Le Triomphe de la Paix* (par Delacroix); Le Carmel; Mon Ami Colbrun; Cas de Conscience; Un poète anacréontique; La Revue Nocturne; Une séance de Magnétisme; Étude de tête d'après la bosse
Révélations sur l'arrestation d' Émile Thomas	1		1848	a pamphlet; not in the general catalogue, but published at fifty cents
Souvenirs Dramatiques	2	758	?	*Vol i.* contains: Les Mystères; Le Théâtre des Anciens et le nôtre; William Shakespeare; De la subvention des Théâtres; Corneille et *Le Cid*; Pichat et son *Léonidas*; La Littérature et les Hommes d'État; Mon Odyssée à la Comédie

Title.	Lévy Edition. Vols.	Lévy Edition. Pages.	Date of First Publication.	Notes.
				Française ; Les Trois Phèdre ; Action et Réaction littéraire ; Le Baron Taylor *Vol ii.* contains : L'*Œdipe* de Sophocle et L'*Œdipe* de Voltaire ; *Othello ; La Camaraderie,* les Collaborateurs et M. Scribe ; *Louis XI* de Mély Janin et de Casimir Delavigne ; De la critique littéraire ; Les auteurs dramatiques au conseil d'état ; *Dix ans de la vie d'une femme,* ou la moralité de M. Scribe ; Àpropos de *Mauprat* ; Henri V et Charles II ; De la nécessité d'un second Théâtre Français ; L'*Ulysse* de Ponsard
Une Vie d'Artiste	1	308	1854	a biographical sketch of the actor Mélingue

Note (1).—To the above may be added as hypothetical works of Dumas (not included in the Lévy collection) the following : *Armée Française* (1845), *Aventures et tribulations d'un comédien* (1852), *Les Crimes célèbres* (1841), *Histoire d'une Âme* (1844), *Histoire d'un mort* (1844), *Saphir, pierre précieuse* (1854), and the *Souvenirs de* 1830 *à* 1842 (1854), which are the same as found in *Mes Mémoires* and other of his *Souvenirs*.

Note (2).—The following are the names of poems written by Dumas on various occasions, collected and quoted in full by M. Charles Glinel in his *Alexandre Dumas et son oeuvre.* They are arranged chronologically :

Élégie sur la mort du général Foy (Sétier 1825) ; *Canaris* (sold for the benefit of the Greeks) (Sanson 1826) ; *La Néréide* ; *L'Adolescent malade* ; *L'Aigle blessé* ; *Romance* ; *Souvenirs* ; *Le Poète* ; *Le Siècle et la Poésie* ; *Leipsick* ; *La Peyrouse* ; *Reichenau* ; *Le Sylphe* ; *Rêverie* ; *Les Trois Dons de la Péri* ; *Le Mancenillier* ; *Les Génies* ; *Fragment* ; *Sur la Loire* ; *Misrael* (all these were published in the periodical *La Psyché,* between March 1826 and May 1829 ; *Le Sylphe* and *Misrael* were republished in *Les Annales Romantiques*) ; *À Victor Hugo* (quoted in the *Correspondance Littéraire* of February 5, 1857) ; *À mon ami Sainte-Beuve* (published in the *Almanack des Muses* for 1830) ; verses which form a preface to *Antony* (1831) ; *Les Âmes* (in *Les Annales Romantiques,* 1832) ; *L'Embarquement* (in the *Talisman,* 1835) ; *La Grande Chartreuse* (in *Les Annales Romantiques,* 1835) ; verses written on the death of his mother (1838) ; verses to Ida Ferrier preceding the MS. of *L'Alchimiste* (1839) ; *Sur la tombe d'Oline Nesterzof* (published in *Le Caucase,* 1859) ; various verse translations from Russian authors (published in *En Russie,* 1859) ; *La Revue nocturne* (translation from the ballad of Zedlitz (*Propos d'Art et de cuisine*).

APPENDIX I

F. HISTORICAL NOVELS in sequence of time, with indication of those which form series.

Title.	Date when Story Begins.	Reign.	Notes.
Acté	57 A.D.	time of Nero	
Le Prince des Voleurs and Robin Hood	1160	Louis VII of France (Henry II of England)	
Le Bâtard de Mauléon	1361	Charles V of France (Edward III of England)	deals chiefly with the fighting in Spain connected with Pedro of Castile
Gaston Phoebus (printed in vol. v of *Salvator*)	1385	Charles VI	
Le Salteador (*ou* Le Gentilhomme de la Montagne)	1519	François I	
Une Nuit à Florence	1537	François I	deals with Florence under Alexandre de Médicis
Ascanio . . .	1540	François I	the principal characters are Benvenuto Cellini, the King of France, and Madame d'Étampes
Les Deux Diane	1550	Henri II	the two Dianas are Diana de Poitiers, mistress of Henri II, and their daughter, Diane de Castro. The hero of the story is Gabriel, Comte de Montgomery
and Le Page du Duc de Savoie	1555	Henri II	this is not so much a sequel to *Les Deux Diane* as another story of the same years, its scene being chiefly the Netherlands, and the principal character, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. Both stories end with the death of Henri II in 1559

APPENDIX I

Title.	Date when Story Begins.	Reign.	Notes.
La Reine Margot	1572	Charles IX	opens with the marriage of Marguerite de Valois ("La Reine Margot") to Henri de Navarre; the main subject is Catherine de Médicis and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; ends with the death of Charles IX (1574)
La Dame de Monsoreau	1578	Henri III	The "lady of Monsoreau" is Diane de Méridor, wife of the chief huntsman of the king; the principal character of the story is Chicot, the king's jester, under which name, "Chicot, the Jester," the story is generally known in English translations
Les Quarante Cinq	1585	Henri III	The title is from the Gascon bodyguard of the king: contains a good deal of fighting (siege of Cahors and siege of Antwerp), and the circumstances which originated the Catholic "League." *Note.*—A good deal of the history in this novel must be taken as retrospective, since the Duc d'Anjou, who figures conspicuously in it, died in 1584.
Les Trois Mousquetaires	1625	Louis XIII (Charles I of England)	Richelieu, Anne of Austria, Buckingham, are the chief historical characters; the story covers three years, 1625–1628
Vingt ans après	1645	Regency of Anne of Austria	France under Mazarin; covers 1645–1649 (the execution of Charles I)
Le Vicomte de Bragelonne	1660	Louis XIV (Charles II of England)	deals with the restoration of Charles II, and with French history down to the Dutch war of 1672, introducing Monk, Fouquet, "the man in the iron mask," Colbert, Louise de la Vallière, etc.

APPENDIX I

Title.	Date when Story Begins.	Reign.	Notes.
La Tulipe Noire .	1672	Louis XIV	The chief historical characters are the two De Witts and William of Orange
La Dame de Volupté	1683	Louis XIV	These are the so-called *Mémoires* de Madame de Luynes (otherwise Comtesse de Verrue), the chief facts about whom are found in Saint Simon. The lady lived for some years at Turin with Victor Amadeus of Savoy
and Les Deux Reines	1703		The second book relates her experiences at the Court of Spain. The "two queens" are the first and second wives of Charles II of Spain, Marie Louise, and Marie Anna of Neuburg
Les Chevalier d'Harmental	1718	Regency of the Duc d'Orléans	Both stories deal with plots formed against the Regent, the first being the Cellamare conspiracy, the second being formed in Brittany, and also prompted by Spain
and Une Fille du Régent	1719		
Mémoires d'une Aveugle	1720	Regency and Louis XV	These are the supposed memoirs of Madame la Marquise du Deffand—a celebrated *grande dame* in the early part of the eighteenth century, and in her later years the friend and correspondent of Horace Walpole
and Les Confessions de la Marquise			
Olympe de Clèves	1727	Louis XV	The story of an actress, in the course of which Louis XV, Cardinal Fleury, the Duc de Richelieu, the Marquise de Prie, etc., are introduced

APPENDIX I

Title.	Date when Story Begins.	Reign.	Notes.
Joseph Balsamo (Mémoires d'un (Médecin)	1770	Louis XV	Balsamo is the first *alias* of Cagliostro ; the story deals with one phase of social feeling antecedent to the Revolution, and covers four years, down to the death of Louis XV (1774)
Le Collier de la Reine	1784	Louis XVI	The affair of the diamond necklace (Marie Antoinette, Cardinal de Rohan, and Madame de La Motte)
Ange Pitou . .	1789	Louis XVI	deals with the storming of the Bastille, and the events of the following three months
La Comtesse de Charny	1790	Louis XVI	carries the history of the Revolution down to the arrest of the king and queen at Varennes (June 21, 1791)
Le Chevalier de Maison Rouge	1793	Republic	deals with the fall of the Gironde party, and the execution of Marie Antoinette
Le Docteur Mystérieux	1785	Louis XVI	The two form a series called *Création et redemption*, describing the education of a young girl by a doctor (Jacques Méry), their perils through the Revolution, and their marriage. Robespierre is a prominent figure in the second part of the story
and La Fille du Marquis	1793	Republic	
Blanche de Beaulieu (printed in the *Souvenirs d'Antony*)	1793	Republic	an episode of the Reign of Terror, at Nantes
Les Blancs et les Bleus	1793	Republic	These are companion-books, covering the history from the Reign of Terror to the Battle of Marengo (1800)
and Les Compagnons de Jéhu	1799		

APPENDIX I

Title.	Date when Story Begins.	Reign.	Notes.
La Sans Félice and Emma Lyonna and Souvenirs d'une favorite	1798 / 1799 / 1800	Republic	deals with events at Naples (the restoration of the Bourbons by Nelson, Cardinal Ruffo, Caraccioli, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, etc.)
Le Capitaine Richard	1812	Napoleon I	deals with the War of Liberation
Le Maître d'Armes	1825	Charles X	a story dealing with Russia and describing the conspiracy of 1825 against the Emperor Nicholas and in favour of Constantine
Les Louves de Machecoul	1831	Louis Philippe	dealing with the rising in La Vendée in favour of the Duchesse de Berry
La Terreur Prussienne	1866	Napoleon III	An account of the "Seven Weeks' War" between Austria and Prussia; contains many details about Bismarck

APPENDIX II

FRENCH AUTHORITIES ON DUMAS.

Exclusive of Biographical Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias, the following are some of the French publications dealing with Alexandre Dumas.[1]

Anonymous—Alexandre Dumas dévoilé par le Marquis de la Pailleterie (Paris, 1847).
— Alexandre Dumas, roi de Naples (Paris 1860).
— M. Alexandre Dumas sur la sellette (Paris 1845).
— Le critique J. Janin et le dramaturge A. Dumas (Paris 1843).
— Plaidoyer du Marquis Alexandre Dumas, envers et contre tous (Paris 1847).
— Réponse d'un Cochon à M. Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1848).
— Réponse d'un Ours à M. Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1848).
— Voltaire turlupiné par Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1855).
— Vérité ! sur les Lettres et Révelations de M. A. Dumas concernant M. Buloz, la Comédie Française et l'Art en général (Paris 1845).
Asseline (Alfred)—Victor Hugo intime (Paris 1885).
Asselineau (Charles)—Bibliographie romantique (Paris 1872 and 1874).
Audebrand (Philibert)—Alexandre Dumas à la Maison d'Or (Paris 1888).
Badère (Madame Clémence)—Le Soleil Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1855).
Banville (Théodore de)—Odes funambulesques (Paris 1857).
— Les Camées Parisiens, second series (Paris 1866–1873).
— Mes Souvenirs : Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1882).
Beauchamps (J. de) et Ed. Rouveyre—Guide du libraire antiquaire et du bibliophile, Nos. 65, 113, 209 (Paris 1882–1884).
Bibliophile Français (Le)—vols 1, 2, 3, 6 (Paris 1868–1873).
Biré (Edmond)—Victor Hugo avant 1830 (Paris 1883).
Blaze de Bury (H.)—Alexandre Dumas, sa vie, son temps, son oeuvre (Paris 1885).
Boissieu (Arthur de)—Lettres d'un passant, second series (Paris 1869).
Bourdon (Aimé)—La Traité des Blancs, comédie en 3 actes, dédiée à la Maison Alexandre Dumas et Cie.
[The principal character is an *entrepreneur* of literature, Alexis Noiraud.] (Paris 1845).
Cassagnac (Granier de)—Portraits Littéraires (Paris 1852).
Castle (A.)—Examen phrénologique du caractère d'Alexandre Dumas (London 1855).

[1] This list is taken mainly from the Appendix of M. Charles Glinel's book (*Alexandre Dumas et son oeuvre*), with some modifications and a few additions.

APPENDIX II

Catalogue—d'une importante collection de lettres autographes (Paris 1885).

[Includes various letters from and to Dumas, viz: No. 3, Letter from Edmond About; No. 94, Letter from Dumas to Émile de Girardin, and reply; No. 98, forty-three autograph letters from Dumas to various correspondents; No. 109, Letter from Paul Féval; No. 145, Letter from Victor Hugo, who, writing from Jersey in reply to Dumas, says: "Your letter is more than a letter; it is a hand pressing my hand. Dear Dumas, there cannot be and there never will be any separation between our hearts. Our two dawns were blended together."]

Catalogue—de portraits (Paris 1885, librairie Roblin).

[Nos. 404–423 are portraits of Dumas.]

Catalogue de la Bibliothèque Lessore (Paris 1882).

[No. 49 is *Dodecaton ou le Livre des Douze*—Dumas being one of the twelve. Paris 1847.]

Chasles (Philarète)—Portrait d'Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1875).

Cherbuliez (Joël)—Revue critique des livres nouveaux (Paris 1838).

Chincholle (Charles)—Alexandre Dumas aujourd'hui (Paris 1869).

Claretie (Jules)—L'Empire, les Bonaparte et la Cour (Paris).

Commerson—Les Binettes contemporaines (pp. 31–38) (Paris).

Crémieux—Plaidoirie de Madame Crémieux (Paris 1857).

[In the action of Dumas against Michel Lévy *frères*.]

Dash (la Comtesse)—Portraits Contemporains (Jacques Reynaud) (Paris 1867).

D'Auriac (Eugène)—D'Artagnan (Paris 1846).

Davroux (A.) Douze célébrités du département de l'Aisne (Saint-Quentin 1885).

Delair (Paul)—L'éloge d'Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1872).

Delhasse (Félix)—Annuaire dramatique de la Belgique (Brussels 1839).

Dubarry (Armand)—Quatre célébrités (Paris, Librairie de la Société des Gens de Lettres).

Du Camp (Maxime)—Souvenirs Littéraires (Paris 1882).

Dumas (Alexandre)—Le Monument de (Paris 1884).

Dumas (Alexandre *fils*)—Préface du *Fils Naturel*—Théâtre Complet (Paris 1868–1877).

— Discours à Villers Cotterets (1872).

— Discours à l'Académie (1875).

Ferry (Gabriel)—Les dernières années d'Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1883).

Gautier (Théophile)—Histoire du Romantisme.

— Histoire de l'Art dramatique en France, vol ii. (Leipsick 1859).

— Portraits Contemporains (Les belles femmes de Paris) (Paris 1839).

Glinel (Charles)—Alexandre Dumas et son oeuvre (Reims 1884).

Gozlan (Léon)—Article sur le château de Monte Cristo (Almanac Comique 1848).

Harel—*Le Succès*, comédie (Paris 1843).

[The character of Laroche represents Dumas.]

Haussonville (Le Comte de)—Speech at the reception of Dumas *fils* into the French Academy (1875).

Heilly (Georges d')—Dictionnaire des Pseudonymes (Paris 1869).

— Journal intime de la Comédie Française (Paris 1879).

Houssaye (Arsène)—Mémoires (Paris 1885).

Hugo (Charles)—Les Hommes de l'Exil (Paris 1875).

Hugo (Madame Victor)—Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie (second vol.) (Paris 1863).

Janin (Clément)—Dédicaces et Lettres autographes (Dijon 1884).

Janin (Jules)—Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1871).

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Journals—*Argus Soisonnais* (April 18, 1872; July 8, 1883).
— *Le Charivari* (May 3, 1847).
— *Le Commerce* (February 1, and February 20, 1847).
— *Les Débats* (November 1, 26, 1833; July 30, 1834; July 27, August 7, 1843).
— *Le Droit* (February 20, 1847).
— *L'Événement* (January 3, 1885).
— *Le Figaro* (October 17, 1844; November 5, 1883).
— *Le Gil Blas* (April 5, 1881).
— *Le Guetteur de Saint-Quentin* (February 17, 1882).
— *L'Indépendance Belge* (November 20, 1870).
— *Journal de l'Aisne* (September 30, 1842; August 30, 1865; April 18, 1872; October 6, 7, 1884).
— *Journal des Artistes* (December 13, 1844).
— *Journal des Femmes* (July 1843).
— *Journal de Saint-Quentin* (February 22, 1885).
— *Moniteur Universel* (August 9, 1830; January 1, 1831; July 2, 1837; April 19, 1884).
— *Le National* (January 31, 1847; March 8, 1847).
— *La Patrie* (October 1, 1884).
— *Le Petit Journal* (February 13, 1862).
— *La Presse* (July 30, 1843).
— *La Tribune Sacrée* (January 1847).
Karr (Alphonse)—Les Guêpes (Paris 1878).
La Pommeraye (Henri de)—Conférence sur Dumas à Villers Cotterets (October 1875).
— Conférence sur Dumas à Laon (October 1884).
Lecomte (Jules)—Lettres sur les écrivains Français par Van Engelgom (Brussels 1837).
Ledru (Pierre) ("baron le Blaguenpuff" pseudonym)—Réponse à l'auteur du pamphlet Maison Alexandre Dumas et Cie. (Paris 1845).
Lemaître (Jules)—Les Contemporains (Paris 1889).
L'Héritier de l'Ain—Plutarque drôlatique (Paris 1843).
Loménie (Louis de)—Galerie des contemporains illustres par un homme de rien (vol v.) (Paris 1842).
Lorenz (O.)—Catalogue général de la Librairie française de 1840–1865 (Paris 1867).
Louandre et Bourquelot—La Littérature française contemporaine (vol ii.) (Paris 1839).
Martin (H.) et Paul Lacroix—Histoire de Soissons (Soissons 1837).
Maurel (André)—Les Trois Dumas (Paris 1896).
Maurice (Charles)—Histoire anecdotique du Théâtre (vol ii.) (Paris 1856).
Melleville—Dictionnaire historique du département de l'Aisne (Saint-Quentin 1875).
Mennessier-Nodier (Madame)—Charles Nodier; épisodes et souvenirs de sa vie (Paris 1867)
Mirecourt (Eugène de)—Les Contemporains (vol. xlix.) (Paris 1856).
— Fabrique de Romans, Maison Alexandre Dumas et Cie. (Paris 1845).
Monselet (Charles)—Statues et statuettes contemporaines (Paris 1852).
Nerval (Gérard de)—Souvenirs d'Allemagne (Paris 1860).
Noel et Stoullig—Les Annales du Théâtre (Paris 1876–1884).
Parigot (Hippolyte)—Le Drame d'Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1899).
— Alexandre Dumas *père* (series Les Grands Écrivains français) (Paris 1902).
— Dumas et l'Histoire (*Revue de Paris*, July 15, 1902).
Parran (A.)—Annuaire de la Société des Amis des livres (1884).

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Parran (A.)—Romantiques (éditions originales) (Alais 1881).

Perin (C.)—Recherches bibliographiques sur le département de l'Aisne (Soissons 1883).

Pifteau (B.)—Alexandre Dumas en manches de chemise (Paris 1884).

Quérard (J. M.)—Les supercheries littéraires dévoilées (second edition) (Paris 1870).

Robin (C.)—Notice sur Alexandre Dumas (Paris 1848).

Romand (H.)—Notice sur M. Dumas (*Revue des Deux-Mondes* of January 15, 1834).

Royer (Alphonse)—Histoire Universelle du Théâtre (Paris).

Saint-Michel (N. C. de)—Revue de Paris (November 1833).

Samson—Mémoires (Paris 1882).

Sand (George)—Lettre dédicace à Alexandre Dumas, preceding her drama of *Molière* (Paris 1851).

— Correspondance (vol. iv.) (Letter to Dumas *fils*).

Séchan (Charles)—Souvenirs d'un homme de Théâtre (Paris 1883).

Shaw (Madame Mathilde)—Alexandre Dumas *père* (*La Nouvelle Revue* August 1, 1899).

Uzanne (Octave)—Notice in *Le Livre* (November 10, 1884).

— Notice in *Le Livre Moderne*, together with portraits and caricatures of Dumas (December 10, 1890).

Villemessant (H. de)—Mémoires d'un journaliste (Paris 1872).

Weiss (J. J.)—Le Théâtre et les Moeurs (preface) (Paris).

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